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ABSTRACT

This book offers middle and high school principals (with or without a background in reading instruction or curriculum) the tools to help teachers and lead their schools to reading excellence. The book presents the current status of student achievement in America, links the importance of reading to learning, clarifies the learning process of reading, and shows how to engage students to read effectively. It contains these special features: five simple-to-follow strategies for raising reading achievement; critical attributes of the process illustrated graphically; a glossary of reading "jargon"; goals-at-a-glance for every chapter; and review of exemplary reading programs that work. The book is divided into the following sections: (1) "Middle and High School Reading Achievement: Where Do We Stand?"; (2) "Focus on Changing What You Can Change"; (3) "Teach the Students Who Can't Read How To Read"; (4) "Teach Every Student How To Read to Learn"; (5) "Motivate Every Student To Read a Lot: Reading in the "Zone"; (6) "Motivate Every Student To Read a Lot: How To Do It"; (7) "Create a Reading Culture in Your School"; and Conclusion. (Contains approximately 250 references.) Includes a glossary, programs for learning to read, strategic reading programs, and goals at a glance. (NKA)

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RAISING READING ACHIEVEMENT IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals

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RAISING READING ACHIEVEMENT IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals

Elaine K. McEwan

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Preface

Raising reading achievement in middle and high schools is a difficult assignment, even for the most effective instructional leaders. Not only do most adolescents read less as they mature, the majority of their teachers are convinced that teaching reading is not in their job description. With the advent of "high stakes" testing, however, raising the reading achievement of middle and high school students has taken on a new urgency. Without the ability to read well, students face the very real possibility of failing their exit exams. Educators face failure of a different sort: the inability to provide students with the essential skills and knowledge they need to survive in today's complex, technological world.

In 1998, I wrote *The Principal's Guide to Raising Reading Achievement* and developed a workshop based on my personal experiences with raising achievement in a suburban Chicago elementary school. Thus began the exhilarating experience of working with thousands of educators in the United States and Canada. Many middle and high school principals attended the programs, frustrated by how little they knew about reading instruction and how few success stories were available to inspire them. They were overwhelmed with the enormity of their task and desperate for solutions. There are no easy answers to the problems of helping adolescents become more proficient readers, but there are programs that raise reading achievement, schools that are making a difference, and principals who are refusing to accept failure as the norm. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High Schools* contains the most current research about what works, suggestions from successful practitioners, descriptions of programs that raise reading achievement, and tips from my own on-the-job experiences in raising achievement. You will find five simple-to-follow strategies that can help you lead your staff and students to higher reading achievement.

I have written with these five goals in mind:

- To convince you of the power that rests in you and your faculty to improve literacy in your student body
- To focus your attention on a dozen variables at work in your instructional delivery system that can be altered to make a difference in reading achievement
- To give you a short course in how children learn to read, regardless of age or grade, so that you can make informed decisions about curriculum and instruction
- To demonstrate the importance of systematically teaching every student, even the best and brightest, how to read more strategically
- To inspire you to take on the assignment of motivating your students to do three things: (a) read *more* than they are currently reading, (b) read *more challenging* and *well-written* books, and (c) be *accountable* for understanding and remembering what they read.

Who This Book Is For

This book has been written for several audiences. It is primarily intended for middle and high school principals to help them develop a plan for raising reading achievement in their schools. New administrators or those without a background in reading instruction or curriculum will find the book especially helpful. Reading specialists and central office administrators can use it to evaluate middle and high school reading programs and formulate district improvement goals. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High Schools* can also serve as a valuable resource for site-based teams as they grapple with what needs to change in their schools. Last, the book provides a source of information for reading educators at colleges and universities as they seek to make their classroom experiences more relevant to practitioners.

What This Book Is Not

Although there are certainly many practical suggestions contained herein, this book is not intended as an instructional guide nor does it contain lesson plans for classroom teachers. It is designed to help you explore a variety of options so that you might be better prepared to exercise instructional leadership. The "silver bullet" for which you have been searching does not exist. School improvement initiatives must be rooted in a school's culture and climate and are better framed by a team of teachers in response to the challenges posed by the community and its students. There are many solutions to the problems of low or declining achievement, but determining what is best for your school will require research, study, and discussion by you and your faculty.

Overview of the Contents

Chapter 1 explores the current state of reading achievement in the United States. We'll examine the results of the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading tests to see where we stand as a nation and also to consider what adolescents need in their schooling experiences when it comes to reading instruction.

Chapter 2 introduces the first strategy: *Focus on changing what you can change.* You will be challenged to examine your beliefs regarding why students don't learn to read and then asked to consider 12 variables that can be altered to raise achievement.

Chapter 3 describes the second strategy: *Teach the students who can't read how to read.* Regardless of how desperately we may cling to the idea that the job should have been done by someone else, we must begin where students are developmentally. If they cannot decode words, we must begin there. You will be given a short course in how students learn to read and then be introduced to several programs that work with the lowest-achieving readers.

Chapter 4 explains the third strategy: *Teach every student how to read to learn.* This strategy is a major key to improving overall reading achievement in your school; it is also the strategy that will require the most dramatic and systemic change. If students are unable to "use reading for their personal and professional needs in such a way that their prior knowledge gets synthesized and analyzed by what they read" (Curtis & Longo, 1999, p. 10), we must be prepared to teach them how to do this. Faculty will be asked to learn new skills, incorporate strategies into their content lesson plans, and assume instructional responsibilities they have heretofore ignored. The chapter includes blueprints from educators who have designed and implemented such programs successfully.

Chapters 5 and 6 introduce a strategy that is underused but enormously powerful: *Motivate all students to read more, to read increasingly more challenging books, and to be accountable for what they read.* The vicious cycle that paralyzes students when they fail to read enough must be reversed. Reading a lot increases fluency, vocabulary, and knowledge. The more students read, the more they know. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., (2000) puts it this way: "The more you know, the more readily you can learn something new" (p. 9). But merely reading a lot is not enough. Students must read challenging text and also be held accountable for what is read. There are no manuals that show teachers how to motivate students to read more. There are no programs that can share the joy of books with students. Every staff member must undertake this assignment with their own brand of enthusiasm and creativity.

Last, Chapter 7 sets forth the final strategy of the five simple-to-follow strategies: *Create a reading culture in your school.* Instructional leadership, shared decision making, planning, parental involvement, and assessment and accountability will be examined as they relate to building a community that not only provides instruction and motivation for reading but demands that students and teachers be committed to daily reading as a skill and a practice.

The Conclusion relates a poignant story that I hope will inspire you to take action on what you have learned while reading *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High Schools.* There are also four resource sections. Resource A contains a glossary to help you understand some of the jargon and terms currently being used in reading instruction. Resources B and C contain descriptions of exemplary programs for teaching students to read and for teaching students to read to learn. Resource D contains a complete set of the figures and forms exhibits used in the book.

For Principals on the Go

One of my favorite middle school language arts teachers, Adrienne Hamparian Johnson, developed what she calls her "Goals at a Glance." She condensed the key goals of the 8th grade Language Arts curriculum onto a sheet of Pulsar Pink, $8^1/_2$" × 11" card stock and laminated it. A quick glance at her sheet from time to time serves to refresh her memory and refocus her instruction on what's really important for her students to achieve. I have provided several such goals-at-a-glance reminders throughout the book and then reassembled them in one location, Resource D. Use the goals-at-a-glance visuals to help you review what you've read, post them on your bulletin board to remind you of what works in reading instruction, or use them as overheads in a presentation to your reading task force or faculty. The first Goals at a Glance in Figure P.1 previews the Five Simple-to-Follow Strategies that organize the book.

FIGURE P.1

Goals at a Glance: Five Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Raising Reading Achievement

Five Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Raising Reading Achievement

1. Focus on changing what you can change.

2. Teach the students who can't read how to read.

3. Teach every student how to read to learn.

4. Motivate all students to read *more* books, to read increasingly *more challenging* books, and to *be accountable* for what they read.

5. Create a reading culture in your school.

McEwan, E. K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: 5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals.*

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An Invitation to Read

Reading has always been my passion. I can't remember a time when I haven't been a voracious reader. Perhaps if I'd lived in a city with its distractions of playgrounds and playmates, I might have read less, but in the quiet countryside, reading was my entertainment, and books were my only companions. I can relate to Anna Quindlen's (1998) musings in her book, *How Reading Changed My Life:*

> There was always a sense in me that I ought to be somewhere else. And wander I did, although in my everyday life, I had nowhere to go and no imaginable reason on earth why I should want to leave. The buses took the interstate without me; the trains sped by. So I wandered the world through books. (p. 3).

Like Quindlen, I, too, wandered the world through books as a child, and I must confess, I still do.

While serving as a teacher, librarian, and elementary school principal, I shared my love of reading with hundreds of students and colleagues. In the pages ahead, I will recommend a number of books to you, titles that I hope will stimulate your thinking and assist you in making progress toward the goal of raising reading proficiency and enjoyment for all students. Whether you call your reading SSR (Sustained Silent Reading), FVR (Free Voluntary Reading), or DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), "just do it." Read with a highlighter or pad of sticky arrows in hand so that you can return to the sections that stir your thinking or emotions. Remember, if *you* don't read a lot, how can you create a reading culture in your school?

The Challenge

I hope that after reading this book, you will be motivated to set about raising reading achievement in your school. Changing the attitudes, accountability, and achievement of your students and teachers with regard to reading may require some changes on your part as well. Begin today by reading a book—perhaps one from my recommendations or a classic that you missed when you were growing up. Talk with students or faculty members about books they are reading. Wander around classrooms and notice how often you see students reading. Ask them about what they are reading and why they chose a particular book. Talk with your librarian about circulation trends and the reading habits of your students and faculty. Read aloud to students from your favorite poetry or short story anthology. If you're really ambitious, sign up for a reading methods course at your local university. Exercise your instructional leadership and creativity to lead your faculty and students to new levels of literacy.

About the Author

Elaine K. McEwan is a partner and educational consultant with The McEwan-Adkins Group, offering training in instructional leadership, team building, raising achievement, and school-community relations. A former teacher, librarian, principal, and assistant superintendent for instruction in a suburban Chicago school district, she is the author of over two dozen books for parents and educators. Her Corwin Press titles include *Leading Your Team to Excellence: Making Quality Decisions; Seven Steps to Effective Instructional Leadership; The Principal's Guide to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; How to Deal with Parents Who Are Angry, Troubled, Afraid, or Just Plain Crazy; The Principal's Guide to Raising Reading Achievement; Counseling Tips for Elementary School Principals* with Jeffrey A. Kottler; *Managing Unmanageable Students: Practical Solutions for Educators* with Mary Damer; and *The Principal's Guide to Raising Math Achievement.*

McEwan is the education columnist for the *Northwest Explorer* newspaper, a contributing author to several online Web sites for parents, and can be heard on a variety of syndicated radio programs helping parents solve schooling problems. She was honored by the Illinois Principals Association as an outstanding instructional leader, by the Illinois State

Board of Education with an Award of Excellence in the Those Who Excel Program, and by the National Association of Elementary School Principals as the National Distinguished Principal from Illinois for 1991. She received her undergraduate degree in education from Wheaton College and advanced degrees in library science (MA) and educational administration (EdD) from Northern Illinois University. She lives with her husband and business partner, E. Raymond Adkins, in Oro Valley, Arizona. She can be contacted at http://www.elainemcewan.com, where you can learn more about her writing and workshops.

To E. Raymond Adkins
Editor, partner, best friend, and husband

1

Middle and High School Reading Achievement: Where Do We Stand?

RECOMMENDED READING

Meichenbaum, Donald, and Biemiller, Andrew. (1998). *Nurturing Independent Learners: Helping Students Take Charge of Their Learning*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline. The authors describe a powerful model for creating classroom programs that support student mastery of reading.

Chall, Jeanne S. (2000). *The Academic Achievement Challenge: What Really Works in the Classroom*. New York: Guilford. Jeanne Chall was Emeritus Professor of Education at Harvard until her death in 1999. This is her last book, and it touches on a central issue in education: how best to instruct our students.

> If you do not learn to read and you live in America, you do not make it in life.
>
> —Patton and Holmes (1998, p. 1)

From time to time, one hears about an individual who has learned to read as a mature adult. One of the more remarkable "senior readers" I've heard about is George Dawson (2000), the 102-year-old grandson of a slave. He tired of writing his name with an X, and learned to read and write at the age of 98 (Kinosian, 2000, p. 22). Dawson even went on to coauthor a book, *Life Is So Good*. His uplifting life story, although heartwarming, is the exception rather than the rule. Late bloomers who emerge from a lifetime of illiteracy with few emotional or psychological scars are hard to find.

Most individuals who have struggled with reading have more in common with the Mexican revolutionary leader portrayed in the film, *Viva Zapata!*[1] His charismatic personality mesmerizes his followers, but he is powerless to conquer the printed page. In the film, we see him staring at a book, putting his hand across his eyes, pounding the desk, and shouting with frustration, "I can't read." A young man I've recently come to know can relate to the anger of the illiterate in this cinematic classic. My friend, Robert, has been there and done that.

Robert looks like a typical 16-year old—oversized clothes and multiple earrings. Shy and unassuming, he is a mechanical whiz, has a favorite author (Gary Paulsen), and took his girlfriend to the prom. One would never guess from observing Robert in school today that less than 3 years ago, he was one of his district's most troubled students. He owned the record for "most classes attended and suspended from by a behavior-disordered student under the age of 14." Robert specialized in getting booted from classes taught by teachers who specialized in teaching students like Robert. He tangled with the best and won. Or lost, from an educational perspective. What was responsible for turning around Robert's behavior almost overnight? He learned to read! Who was responsible for making it happen? A gifted teacher who asked only one question, "Why does Robert act the way he does?"

Linda Taylor, a special education teacher in a small northern Michigan high school, asked Robert's older brother, Johnnie, that question. He shared a remarkable insight regarding the source of Robert's frustration: "All he has ever wanted is to learn to read." It seemed that when teachers ignored Robert's inability to read and focused solely on behavior, his anger mounted until he could no longer contain himself. On the fateful day when Linda met Robert for the first time, they struck a deal. If Robert would stick with her, she would teach him to read. Since that day, Robert has been a model student, and yes, he did learn to read. The method Linda used and continues to use with all of the students in her classes (hearing impaired, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, and educably mentally impaired) is called The Writing Road to Reading, a multisensory, direct-instruction approach (Spalding & Spalding, 1957/1990). Resource B contains a description of the methodology.

Today, Robert is reading, plus a whole lot more. He is building his own library, painstakingly constructing bookcases for his bedroom and eagerly collecting books. He won a citizenship award from the principal and worked as an aide in the school library. Robert is a changed young man. Literacy is opening doors for Robert that have been slammed in his face for years.

---

[1] Although I have viewed *Viva Zapata!*, I cannot take credit for first noting the scene I describe here. Robert Karlin (1984) first cited it in *Teaching Reading in High School: Improving Reading in the Content Areas.*

There are students like the "old" Robert in every school in America. We label them remedial readers, at-risk students, or behaviorally disordered. You know who they are in your school. They achieve at levels far below their peers, often drop out of school, seldom attend college, and are frequently unable to obtain or hold meaningful jobs.

However, the Roberts of the world are not the only reading underachievers. There is a second category of readers who have mastered the science of reading (decoding) but still do not have the art (meaning and understanding). They fail to monitor their own comprehension or adjust their reading speed when necessary. They believe that if they have read it once, they've read it. They lack the vocabulary and background knowledge to tackle challenging textbooks with success. The solutions to the problems of these readers are more subtle and systemic. To teach *all* students to be more strategic readers, *all* teachers must be involved, not just a remedial teacher or two.

There is a third category of readers that is often ignored altogether. This group contains the students who are capable of reading far more than they do and of reading books that are more challenging. Instead, these active adolescents are watching television, playing computer games, or hanging out at the mall. Granted, there are many teens who are volunteering, participating in extracurricular activities, and holding down part-time jobs. They are hard pressed to find more time to read. But unless we raise our expectations, our students will never make reading a priority in their lives.

What Do Adolescents Deserve?

> By the twelfth grade students are expected each year to read independently two million words of running text. For many students that amount of independent text will not occur without strategic and systematic guidance in their selection of text and reinforcement of independent reading habits.
>
> —California State Board of Education (1999, p. 181).

The International Reading Association's position statement on adolescent literacy (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999) sets forth the following benchmarks for administrators and teachers to use in developing and/or evaluating programs for middle and high schoolers:

- Adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of reading material that they can and want to read. The framers of the document offer these four reasons for boosting your media center budget, making time in the school day for reading, and making sure your selection policies are inclusive: (a) time spent reading is related to reading success, (b) time spent reading is associated with attitudes toward

> additional reading, (c) time spent reading is tied to knowledge of the world, and (d) reading is a worthwhile life experience.
>
> - Adolescents deserve instruction that builds both the skill and the desire to read increasingly complex materials.
> - Adolescents deserve assessment that shows them their strengths as well as their needs and that guides their teachers to design instruction that will best help them to grow.
> - Adolescents deserve expert teachers who model and provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension and study strategies across the curriculum.
> - Adolescents deserve reading specialists who assist individual students having difficulty learning to read.
> - Adolescents deserve teachers who understand the complexities of individual adolescent readers, respect their differences, and respond to their characteristics.
> - Adolescents deserve homes, communities, and a nation that will support their efforts to achieve advanced levels of literacy and provide the support necessary for them to succeed. (pp. 101-106)

Are our adolescents getting what they deserve? Let's take a look at their reading achievement and find out.

The Current State of Reading Achievement in the United States

The most reliable wide-scale study of reading achievement in the United States is by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This federally sponsored test is periodically given in reading (and other subjects) to a nationwide sample of students in 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. Three rounds of the NAEP reading test have been administered in the past decade (1992, 1994, and 1998), and the results track our progress in raising reading achievement (Donahue, Voelke, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999; Mullis, Campbell, & Farstrup, 1993; Williams, Reese, Campbell, Mazzeo, & Phillips, 1995). When considering the results of a large-scale summative evaluation like the NAEP's, one can easily lose sight of the fact that the data represent real students, adolescents whose achievement levels are predictive of their academic and vocational futures. It's not about test scores per se. It's about the ability of our students to "understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual" (Elley, 1992, p. 3), the ability to gain meaning from the printed page.

In 1992, NAEP reported that for grades 4, 8, and 12, the percentages of students estimated to have met or exceeded the Proficient achievement level were 29, 29, and 40% respectively (Mullis et al., 1993). "'Proficient,' the central level of the three score levels reported [Basic, Proficient, Advanced], represents solid academic performance and competency over challenging subject matter (for the grade level)" (Donahue et al., 1999, p. 9). In 1994, the percentages of students in the tested levels who met or exceeded the Proficient level were 30, 30, and 36 (Williams et al., 1995), and in 1998, the percentages were 31, 33, and 40 (Donahue et al., 1999).

There has been no dramatic improvement in reading achievement, particularly at the high school level, during the past decade. Only 6% of the students tested on the most recent NAEP could read at what the NAEP test designers designate the advanced level—being able to synthesize and learn from specialized reading material. Seventeen year-olds are the only age group tested in which scores have declined since the first NAEP was given in 1971. Although there were bright spots in the latest results (a greater percentage of minority students reached the proficient level), the overall results were deemed disappointing (Donahue et al., 1999).

The results of the NAEP do not engender passionate discussion in faculty meetings or even raise teachers' levels of concern. The big news these days is what's happening in almost every state capital across the country. *Education Week's* annual report on the state of education in the United States, *Quality Counts 2000* (Editorial Projects in Education, 2000), reported that eight states have in place what are commonly called "high-stakes" exit exams, and 11 more have them planned for the future. The exit exams usually test 9th or 10th grade standards, and students must pass them to graduate from high school (pp. 72-73). Even states without high school exit exam requirements planned or in place have periodic assessments to measure students' progress toward meeting state standards. Ohio, in a controversial move, has placed the high-stakes test at 4th grade. It's been dubbed "the 4th grade guarantee" (Sandham, 1999). Students who fail the test will not be advanced to the 5th grade without the principal's approval and signature.

Unfortunately for beleaguered school administrators, state assessments often provide more distraction than direction. The state of Virginia experienced assessment woes when, in the first round of high-stakes tests given in the spring of 1998, only 2.2% of the schools met the performance goals (Portner, 1999a). In Massachusetts, students and parents boycotted the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System exams, claiming that the test "does not respect the varied skills of students and saps teachers' ability to structure creative classes" (Gehring, 2000). In the southwest, many 10th grade students taking the Arizona Instrument for Measuring Standards (AIMS) for the first time encountered questions on material they had never covered in school (Corella & Tapia, 1999). In Illinois, the state assessment mutated from the Illinois Goals Assessment Program in the early 1990s to the current ISAT (Illinois Standards Achievement Test), and is slated to change once again as the ISAT is phased out at the high school level and a 12th-grade exit exam called the Prairie Achievement Exam is required (Lorber, 2000).

Instructional leaders have a difficult mission—to keep teachers and students focused on the real issue: the ability of students to read. If you permit yourself or your school community to be diverted by the often contentious debate regarding standards and testing, you can easily forget that raising achievement is about helping individual students make quantum leaps in learning every single year of their academic careers. To keep your students and teachers focused on learning while policy makers argue issues is like driving in a blizzard. To raise reading achievement amidst the current flurry of arguments, focus on (a) helping your students learn to read, (b) teaching them how to read to learn, and (c) motivating them to read larger amounts of text as well as more challenging text while also being accountable for understanding what they have read.

The Role of Standards in Raising Reading Achievement

> How do school leaders meet top-down regulations from outside their districts while still fostering an enhanced collegial on-line sense of initiative and control within their schools? The principal must be in-charge to meet this challenge.
>
> —Goldring and Rallis (1993, p. 18)

There are some who say the results of teaching and learning cannot be measured by a single test. "How can a paper-and-pencil assessment measure creativity, ingenuity, motivation, and perseverance?" they ask. Critics of the standards and assessment movement in the United States paint a bleak picture of where we are headed if we continue down the testing trail: cookie cutter educations, drill and kill, "ram, remember, and regurgitate" (Renzulli, 2000, p. 48), trivial pursuit, and back to the boring basics. If these naysayers are to be believed, there will be no joy left in learning when the "standardistos" (Thompson, 1999) take over. We will all be too busy "prepping for the test."

John Bishop (1993, 1995, 1998a, & 1998b) of Cornell University disagrees. His research has shown that educational systems that have established content standards and then used curriculum-based tests to determine whether students have learned, have improved achievement for all students, including those from less advantaged backgrounds.

Achievement tests can assist you in setting meaningful goals. They *can* drive needed schoolwide improvement initiatives. More important, they *can* give you a standardized, longitudinal picture of the progress that your school and/or individual students are making. Use the tests wisely to raise expectations for both teachers and students; the literacy levels of your students will climb steadily upward.

Your Responsibility as an Instructional Leader

What can you do as an instructional leader to bring about an upward move in reading achievement? Follow the five strategies in the chapters ahead. Make no mistake, however: Although the strategies are simple to follow and easy to understand, they *will* require hard work on the part of you and your faculty.

2

Focus on Changing What You Can Change

RECOMMENDED READING

Carter, Samuel Casey. (1999). *No Excuses: Seven Principals of Low-Income Schools Who Set the Standard for High Achievement*. Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation. Here are seven stories of principals whose instructional leadership is inspiring. Their students are achieving against the odds.

Pressley, Michael. (1998). *Reading Instruction That Works: The Case for Balanced Teaching*. New York: Guilford. This is a well-written and thoughtful book about reading by one of the most eminent researchers in the field of strategy instruction. If you can only read one of the recommended books, read this one!

> I have often wondered how anyone who does not read, by which I mean daily, having some book going all the time, can make it through life. . . . Indeed if I were required to make a sharp division in the very nature of people, I would be tempted to make it there; readers and nonreaders of books.
>
> —W. Brinkley (as quoted in Gilbar, 1990, p. 25)

When I assumed the principalship of a suburban Chicago elementary school in the early 1980s, reading achievement was at an all-time low—the 20th percentile for Grades 2 through 6 on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The news was depressing, and the superintendent made it clear that he was looking for improvement. I was brand new to administration and knew nothing about raising test scores. My teaching experience was in communities similar to the imaginary Lake Woebegon, Minnesota, where all the students are above average. At the first faculty meeting, I asked the teachers why they thought achievement was so low. They had plenty of reasons for the dismal state of affairs: the students, the parents, the community, and central office, to name just a few. Too many of the students were on free and reduced lunch, too many of the parents didn't speak English, the community didn't care what happened in our part of town, and central office had them in a curricular straitjacket. The teachers didn't mention any role they might have personally played in the test results, but their reactions were not unlike those of most teachers faced with failing students. In retrospect, my staff fit the following description to a T: "We say we believe that all children can learn, but few of us really believe it" (Delpit, 1995, p. 172). Faced with what appear to be insurmountable obstacles, teachers often feel powerless to make a difference, and unfortunately, they communicate their low expectations to each other and their students daily.

The responses of my faculty mirrored the Coleman Report of the 1960s. James Coleman (1966), in a massive education research project funded by the federal government, shocked educators when he reported that differences in the resources of schools were not that important. Rather, it was the background of students that made the difference. His report, which set in motion the large-scale busing plans of the late 1960s, completely overlooked schoolwide and classroom variables that could affect student achievement. In response to Coleman's indictment of schools, a group of researchers began to examine school effectiveness, showing that the following variables clearly made an impact on student achievement: administrative leadership; climate conducive to learning, schoolwide emphasis on learning, and teacher expectations of achievement; monitoring system of pupil progress tied to instructional objectives; parent involvement; and time on task (Edmonds, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimer, & Ouston, 1979).

I decided that what the staff needed was a good dose of Benjamin Bloom (1980). At the time, Bloom was writing about what he called "alterable variables." He scolded readers for whining about things over which they had no control (e.g., characteristics of students and their parents). He urged them to focus their energies and creativity on the context or environmental variables that affect student learning (Weinstein & Hume, 1998, p. 101).

As we brainstormed what those context variables might be at Lincoln School, the list began to grow. So did our excitement and motivation to change the way we conducted the business of schooling. During the 8 years we worked together as a team, reading achievement climbed to the 70th percentile and higher. There were few individuals on the staff or in the student body who were not profoundly changed by the process. We discovered that we were capable of achieving far more than we had imagined. We stopped making excuses and started changing what we had the power to change. The words of Ron Edmonds (1981) became our mantra:

> We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far. (p. 53)

We stopped acting defensive, argumentative, and hopeless. Instead, we became focused, optimistic, and empowered.

The 12 variables that we altered in the early 1980s are still germane to raising reading or any other kind of achievement today. The challenge lies in determining just which ones need to be altered in your school and *how* they need to be changed. No one can give you a guaranteed-to-work recipe. Those who study school reform have discovered that replication of what another school has done is difficult, if not impossible, without the vision of a strong leader and the collective efforts of the staff (Traub, 1999). Your school community is unique, and any changes you make must meet the needs of those that work and live there. The vision to guide your school's direction must come from you, the instructional leader, but everyone must have a stake in the planning and implementation—parents, students, staff, and administration.

Here are a dozen variables (you may add others to the list) that you and your staff have the power to change: (a) change how you state your goals, (b) change how you choose what to teach, (c) change the alignment of what you teach, (d) change what you teach, (e) change the amount of time you spend teaching it, (f) change where you teach it, (g) change how you teach it, (h) change who is teaching it, (i) change the amount of time students spend practicing what you teach, (j) change how you assess what you teach, (k) change your expectations for students, and (l) change how you group to teach.

Change How You State Your Goals

Tangible and unyielding goals are the focus of high-performing schools.

—Carter (1999, p. 5)

Every school and district in the United States engages in an annual frenzy of goal setting. It is, without question, a rite of spring in education. The goals are sent to the board of education for approval, printed on card stock, and then posted in offices and classrooms where they are promptly ignored. Here are some typical district goals from one such exercise:

- Implement the new reading program
- Assess the learning styles of low-achieving readers

- Train teachers in the use of reading strategies
- Update the staff development model

If your goals are similar to these, you are not likely to raise achievement. Your efforts will be like those of a basketball team I watched during a recent NBA playoff game. The commentator was lamenting the losing team's lackluster performance as its players raced up and down the court with no evidence of teamwork. "What we need here," the commentator wryly observed, "is less activity and more achievement." He could have been describing the average school in America. Well-meaning professionals are so busy innovating and implementing that they have no idea if what they are doing is getting results.

Mike Schmoker (1999), a school improvement consultant, defines results as "a thoughtfully established, desired end-product, as evidence that something worked (or did not work)" (p. 3). We had only one goal in the first year of our reading-improvement initiative at Lincoln School: reduce the number of students scoring in the bottom quartile by 10%. We called them *target students* because we were targeting our efforts toward improving their reading abilities. We used a standardized test to determine our ultimate success, but teacher-made tests, performance assessments, and curriculum-based measurements were all used during the year as we "dip-sticked" our students' progress at key points. We focused on the numbers. This mind-set is not a natural one for many educators.

Schmoker (1999) points out that "schools have an almost cultural and ingrained aversion to reckoning with, much less living by results" (p. 3). We want to get credit for our good intentions, but unfortunately, good intentions do not necessarily result in improvement. Our goals must be specific and measurable. Measurement means data, and unfortunately for many teachers, data means fear.

> Education seems to maintain a tacit bargain among constituents at every level not to gather or use information that will reveal a clear need for improvement: where we need to do better, where we need to make changes. Data almost always points to action—they are the enemy of comfortable routines. By ignoring data, we promote inaction and inefficiency. (Schmoker, 1999, p. 39)

The staff and students at Lincoln exceeded the initial goal, reducing the number of students scoring in the bottom quartile by nearly 15%. If we had set a global achievement goal at the outset (e.g., to have all of our students reading on grade level), its sheer magnitude would have rendered it meaningless. Instead, we set a reasonable and measurable goal, thus rallying staff members to what Glickman (1990) calls "a cause beyond oneself" (p. 18).

We established a more ambitious goal the following year and reached that one as well. If you and your school improvement team want to raise reading achievement, first examine your current achievement data. Second, determine who or what will be the focus of your efforts. Then, set a measurable goal and define how it will be measured. Build in miniassessments throughout the year. Teachers need constant feedback to keep them energized. "The antidote for fatalism . . . is feedback—clear precise indications that [you] are moving forward and becoming more capable" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 52).

Change How You Choose What to Teach

> New theories of education are introduced into schools every day (without labeling them as experiments) on the basis of their philosophical or common sense plausibility but without genuine empirical support. We should make a larger place for responsible experimentation that draws on the available knowledge. It deserves at least as large a place as we now provide for faddish, unsystematic and unassessed informal experiments or educational reforms. We would advocate the creation of a FEA, an analogy to the FDA which would require well designed clinical trials for every educational drug that is introduced into the market place.
>
> —Anderson, Reder, and Simon (1995, p. 18)

What informs your decisions regarding curriculum? Do you rely on what the "lighthouse" district in the next county is doing? Do teachers take a vote? Or are you so eager to be on the cutting edge that you are always first in line for the "innovation du jour"?

I stopped at a convention booth recently to pick up some literature about a very pricey technology-based reading program.

"Do you have any research about the effectiveness of the program? I asked the representative.

"It's being used in the ABC County Unified School District," he stated proudly.

"Terrific," I replied, "but do you have any research regarding its effectiveness with at-risk students as compared to other programs?"

"It was developed at XYZ State University," he proclaimed, daring me to persist in my questioning.

I persevered nonetheless. "But what about the research?"

"You can call the toll-free number if you want that information," he muttered, as if "that information" was somehow unimportant.

As the pressure mounts to teach all students to gain meaning from challenging text, we can no longer afford to overlook "that information" and so I was delighted to find a report that evaluated the program. Here's what it had to say:

> The program has posted some interesting preliminary results. However, the software is expensive, and no definitive research exists to show that the program is more effective than another intervention because treatment and control groups were not employed in the research design. (Schacter, 1999, p. 39)

Just having "research" is not enough; it must be of sufficient quality to inform decision making.

In 1997, Congress charged the director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to work in cooperation with the Secretary of Education "to assess the status of research-based knowledge, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read" (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 1-1). To accomplish its charge, the panel adopted a set of rigorous research methodological standards based on those used in psychological and medical research. These standards, if applied generally by educators, would substantially alter the way curricula are chosen. As goals become increasingly data driven, and results are no longer just nice but necessary for a school's survival, choosing methods and materials that have quality research to support their efficacy is paramount.

Change the Alignment of What You Teach

Adrienne Hamparian Johnson is an 8th-grade language arts teacher at West Chicago Middle School (IL), where raising reading achievement is a priority. A finalist for Illinois teacher of the year in 1999, Adrienne works tirelessly with her principal and colleagues to make sure that everyone takes the school's mission seriously. Her view regarding the most influential variable in raising achievement: consistency. "A school or a district must be tightly woven," she explains, "with everyone on the same page." The middle school teachers have collaborated with the elementary staff on a districtwide language arts committee to ensure that everyone is pulling in the same direction. Together, they are working to overcome the "this too shall pass" mentality that derails many well-intentioned improvement plans (A. Johnson, personal communication, June 20, 1999). Fenwick English (1992) described it thusly:

> Curriculum design and delivery face one fundamental problem in schools. When the door is shut and nobody else is around, the classroom teacher can select and teach just about any curriculum he or she decides is appropriate. This fact of organizational autonomy represents the shoals of many so-called "reforms" in education: innumerable board policy pronouncements, state testing mandates,

> national goals, superintendent's decisions, or principal/supervisory dicta. (p. 1)

Working to create a tightly woven or aligned curriculum is not an easy undertaking, but without alignment, achieving success is highly improbable. Tightening the alignment of your curriculum should start with the following:

- Visit classrooms to determine exactly what is going on behind those closed doors.
- Map curriculum to determine what is currently being taught at each grade level or in each course.
- Examine textbooks and materials at various grade levels.
- View actual lesson plans or units.
- Meet with grade levels or departments to "listen."
- Conduct a survey of teachers, parents, and students.
- Assess students to determine knowledge and skill gaps.

Consider these attributes of a tightly woven school or district:

- The mastery of certain key skills and concepts is required at some point (i.e., there are expectations that students will achieve certain benchmarks at critical grade levels (e.g., 3rd, 6th, 8th, and 10th grades).
- Teachers use a common language, employ research-based methodologies, and teach the same cognitive strategies schoolwide so that students are able to build on their learning from grade to grade rather than starting over each year.
- Teachers use a standardized assignment notebook and subscribe to similar homework and grading policies.
- Teachers exercise reasonable amounts of autonomy and creativity in their classrooms but never to the detriment of their students' achievement.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of what students are expected to learn in their grade level as well as in prior and subsequent grades and can explain to parents how what they are doing in their classroom relates and contributes to that learning continuum.
- All teachers at the same grade level coordinate their efforts to ensure instructional equity (e.g., all of the sophomore English students

are exposed to the same titles and genres, receive the same amount of instructional time, and are evaluated using the same standards/rubrics).

- All students are told what they are expected to learn, shown how they will be evaluated, and presented with examples and role models that demonstrate excellence.

To raise achievement in reading, aim for curricular quality control:

> a process that concerns the internal capability of a school system to improve its performance over time . . . by developing goals and objectives, employing people to reach the goals, periodically assessing the differences between desired and actual performance, and then using the discrepancy data to adjust and improve day-to-day operations. (English, 1992, p. 19)

A principal told me recently about his poorly performing school and the possible implications for his job security. He wondered what could be done to improve reading achievement. I questioned him about the materials and methods being used in a specific grade level. He sheepishly confessed that the eight teachers at that grade level were each "doing their own thing." Autonomy and creativity were higher priorities than achievement, and the principal may well pay the price with his job.

Change What You Teach

Curriculum is always crucial. But the "what" of reading instruction, particularly for those students who have failed to learn to read before reaching middle or high school, is especially critical. The Goethe Middle School in Sacramento, CA, is changing the "what" of instruction in a big way. An urban Title I school, where every student receives free and reduced lunch, Goethe enrolls a new class of 7th graders every year in which 8 out of 10 students are reading below grade level. The staff agreed that their school was in crisis and set about finding "what" they might do differently to improve reading achievement. They investigated several programs and chose one with an impressive research base: Corrective Reading by SRA (see Resource B for a description of the program). According to Lois Statum, former language arts/social studies teacher and now a literacy coach at the school, "We didn't have time to reinvent the wheel. Our teachers were sick and tired of reading everything aloud to their students." Every teacher was trained to implement the Corrective Reading program as well as a companion program called Writing and Reasoning. For one period each day, every teacher is a reading teacher. Changing the "what" of instruction has done more than improve reading test scores at Goethe; student behavior has improved as well. Staff from the in-school suspension room that routinely handled dozens of requests for help with recalcitrant students during an average class period had no referrals during reading. With every student receiving direct instruction precisely matched to his or her identified reading level, time on task and student engagement has zoomed to an all-time high. Goethe's success has caught the attention of the high school where their graduates matriculate. Goethe teachers are training staff members there who were eager to discover the secret behind the improved reading abilities of Goethe's students. Staff members are also taking their training program on the road to feeder elementary schools, hoping to catch students' reading problems *before* they get to Goethe. During the program's first year of implementation, the 7th- to 8th-grade cohort of students raised their percentile ranking on the Stanford 9 Achievement Test from the 21st to the 35th percentile. This was the fifth largest gain by an individual school in the state of California. Goethe was the only low-achieving school to make any substantial gain in reading achievement across the state.

Change the Amount of Time You Spend Teaching It

> Time on task is not the same as time on the right task.
>
> —Leinhardt (1985, p. 276)

During my rookie administrative year, I spent a lot of time worrying about time. Late one mid-September afternoon as I prepared to lock up the building, I spied a bank of lights still burning in the media center. The 4th through 6th grade teachers were gathered around a table talking earnestly.

"You're working late," I called through the door. "Can I help?"

"Oh," a new teacher piped up, "We're getting organized to start teaching reading next week."

Her more experienced colleagues were savvy enough to be chagrined. I groaned inwardly. These well-meaning but misguided teachers had already wasted 2 valuable weeks of instructional time. No wonder reading scores were so low. This would never happen again. Next year, we would plan for instruction in the spring and begin teaching reading on the very first day of school.

If you want to raise achievement, you must allocate sufficient instructional time to reading, particularly for those students who are well below grade level, and then use every minute of that time wisely. Middle and high school principals, under pressure to raise achievement, are examining every option to find extra time for reaching low-achieving students. Some are organizing Saturday schools. Others conduct after-school tutoring programs. Still others have decided that if students don't know how to read, they will have to forego a portion of the ordinary middle or high school schedule to take extra reading classes.

Unfortunately, in many middle and high schools around the country, there is still plenty of time to waste. There is time for a cross-dressing day in Pittsburgh, PA, and Fort Myers, FL, a pajama day in Fairfax County, VA, and cake-mix-wrestling in Port Charlotte, FL (Malkin, 2000). Perhaps the students in these schools have time for activities in lieu of achievement, but at the Corwin Middle School in Pueblo, CO, there is only time for learning.

Time in unheard of quantities is being invested at Corwin on behalf of students who are at risk of reading failure. For the nearly 100 6th through 8th grade students whose reading achievement levels hit rock bottom at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year, course options included reading, reading, reading, and more reading. All students received at least two periods of reading instruction daily, but those with the lowest scores have at least three and some even four periods of reading. Classes were small, and instruction was intense and direct. For information on the programs used at Corwin, see the description of the Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes in Resource B.

Students and teachers at Corwin are working harder than they have ever worked before, bringing new meaning to the phrase "time on task." A schoolwide reading enrichment program is scheduled during one of the reading periods. Even the physical education teacher has a reading group, gifted students who work on advanced vocabulary study and silent reading. Math and electives (e.g., gym, band, or art) fill the remainder of the low-achieving students' schedules. Principal Kathy DeNiro juggles students, subjects, and staff in a constant cycle of assessment and instructional decision making. Her goal: to make sure that students are placed where they can be successful and make quantum leaps in reading.

She is bucking the research that describes low-achieving students as being off task almost twice as often as high-achieving students (Englert, Torrant, & Mariage, 1992; Fisher & Berliner, 1995) and defying the odds that predict an almost irreversible academic slowdown for at-risk learners in middle school (Mercier, Jordan, & Miller, 1994). DeNiro has only one thing on her side, time, and she has persuaded everyone—her superintendent, faculty, students, and their parents—that ample amounts of it well invested in quality reading instruction will pay rich dividends. The test results are impressive.

Change Where You Teach It

> For too long, reading and writing have been taught as "subjects." They are not subjects like history, geography, or physical science, they are processes, strategies, or tools. . . . We read and write about something. It is impossible to learn or use these language strategies separately from content.
>
> —Irvin (1998, p. 42)

Reading instruction in middle and high schools is frequently relegated to a few remedial classes, often held in portable units in the parking lot. Oh, there may be a handful of English teachers who include some strategy instruction in their literature classes, but rarely do teachers in other content areas concern themselves with reading instruction. Carol Santa (1986) pointed out that "secondary teachers feel their job is to impart particular content information. All too often they forget that their fundamental role is to teach the process of learning" (p. 303).

Increasing numbers of educators are recognizing, however, that changing where reading strategies are taught can make a huge difference in achievement. Meaningful strategy instruction is best done in the context of content classes where all students can reap the benefits of instruction, not just a few. The Parkway School District in suburban St. Louis has done just that. The program, developed by Nancy Rathjen, currently coordinator of Language Arts and Reading in the district, is aptly called Reading Across the Disciplines (RAD). It consists of a systematic integration of reading strategies and study skills into the curricula of social studies, language arts, science, math, and elective subjects. The program is taught most intensively throughout the middle school years according to a well-conceived schedule. Content area teachers know who is responsible for teaching which strategies and when they will be taught. Secondary students continue to receive "refresher" courses as a regular part of their instruction in the content areas. Now in its ninth year of implementation, the program has been responsible for solid reading achievement in the district (N. Rathjen, personal communication, April, 2000). The integration of strategy instruction into a setting where students can immediately apply what they have learned to their daily assignments is an idea whose time has come. The RAD model is worth examining if you want to notch up achievement for every student. See Resource C for a more complete discussion of the RAD model.

Change How You Teach It

> We believe teachers and teaching are the heart of the educational enterprise. . . . We further believe that a teacher's skill makes a difference in the performance of students, not only in their achievement scores on tests (as important as that might be), but in their sense of fulfillment in school and

their feelings of well-being. We do not mean to imply that being skillful substitutes for other human qualities; but we will argue that whatever else teachers do, they perform in the classroom and their actions set the stage for students' experiences—therefore, only a skillful performance will do.

—Saphier and Gower (1987, p. v)

Effective instruction lies at the heart of raising achievement. Research has much to tell us about how effective teachers maximize learning. The following 12 categories summarize the critical aspects of effective instruction. Look for these behaviors during your observations of teachers. Affirm their presence in conferences and written evaluations. Provide staff development to ensure their consistent implementation.

1. Instruction is guided by a preplanned curriculum (Venezky & Winfield, 1979). This characteristic speaks to the need for objectives, time lines, and planning in determining what will be done daily in the classroom.
2. There are high expectations for student learning (Phi Delta Kappa, 1980). Students are not expected to fail because of their socioeconomic status, their parents' educational level, or the neighborhood in which they live. All students are expected to learn and achieve.
3. Students are carefully oriented to lessons (Stallings, 1979). Students are told in advance what is expected of them.
4. Instruction is clear and focused (Lortie, 1975). Lessons are focused on objectives rather than around activities.
5. Learning progress is monitored closely (Evertson, 1982). Teachers hold students accountable and use frequent assessments to see if what they're teaching is getting results. They use this information to modify their instruction.
6. When students don't understand, they are retaught (Rosenshine, 1983). When students fail to understand, the effective teacher figures out what can be changed in his or her instructional methodology and reteaches using an alternative approach.
7. Class time is used for learning (Stallings, 1980). Assemblies and field trips are carefuly evaluated. Intercom announcements and other trivial pursuits are kept to a minimum.
8. There are smooth, efficient classroom routines (Brophy, 1979). Efficient classrooms seem to run by themselves with seamless transitions and little administrivia.
9. The instructional groups formed in the classroom fit instructional needs (Stallings, 1979). Ability-based groups formed in kindergarten do not remain unchanged through high school nor do students who need more specialized instruction fail to get it.

10. Standards for classroom behavior are explicit (Anderson, 1980). Rules, expectations, and consequences are "taught" to students from the first day of school.
11. Personal interactions between teachers and students are positive (Rutter et al., 1979). Effective teachers care about their students and demonstrate this care in thousands of brief interactions daily.
12. Incentives and rewards for students are used to promote excellence (Emmer, 1981). When excellence is defined by objective standards and not by peer comparison and the rewards are appropriate for the level of the student, incentives and rewards work (Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 1984, pp. 3-6).

Those who have become accustomed to so-called student-centered classrooms, where discovery learning is the norm, may be startled by the structure and intensity of direct instruction. Unison responding, small ability groups, highly scripted lessons, and constant diagnosis and correction are its key attributes (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997, pp. 8-19). In the Fort Worth, TX, middle and high schools, students drop everything and read 4 out of 5 days a week, but it isn't the typical silent reading program that most schools use. They're using Corrective Reading, the direct-instruction program developed at the University of Oregon that more than delivers every one of the critical aspects of effective instruction. Fort Worth's Title I reading and language arts coordinator calls it a "first aid station to mend what's missing from [students'] reading skills" (Melendez, 2000). The program was first tried at the Elder Middle School and in just 1 year, scores on the state assessment improved from a total of 68% of the students passing to 78% of the students passing. The good news spread throughout the district, and now it's mandated. Every middle school teacher has been trained to use the program. Science teachers, coaches, and even librarians are teaching Corrective Reading.

Change Who Is Teaching It

> In order for teachers to feel instrumental in their students learning, they must be certain of their practices, and they must hold a high sense of personal teaching efficacy; that is, they must believe that they have the capacity to directly affect a student's performance.
>
> —Kameenui and Darch (1995, p. 14)

Alan Jones is the veteran principal of a large, ethnically diverse high school in the western suburbs of Chicago. Community Consolidated High School is a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence; one of the reasons is the attention that Alan and his administrative team pay to the quality of their teaching staff. They recognize that instructional leaders are powerless to effect change without staff members who are working in concert to achieve the school mission.

> The national focus on macro issues—standards, assessment, vouchers, accountability—continues to avoid the hard work of changing how teachers think about fundamental questions related to learning, organization of subject matter, assessment, and how to treat young people. (Alan Jones, personal communication, May 16, 2000)

Although the district's personnel director leaves no stone unturned in finding the brightest and best trained of each new crop of graduates to replace retiring faculty, Alan immediately begins his own staff development program when they arrive on campus. He offers minicourses, develops learning packets on critical issues, and keeps his entire staff on their toes with engaging discussions. He understands that if progress is to be made, the teachers are the ones who will have to change most dramatically.

Sometimes, changing the "who" of teaching may mean taking more radical steps, such as dealing with ineffective teachers. If you are tempted to ignore marginal teachers, pause to think about the effects on a student, particularly one who is at risk, of spending a year with an ineffective teacher. A statistical model developed by William Sanders and his colleagues at the University of Tennessee, the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (Sanders & Rivers, 1996), has yielded some startling findings that confirm what parents have always believed: When a child gets a bad teacher for 1 year, it hurts; when a child gets bad teachers for 2 years in a row, his or her educational progress can be in jeopardy. In Sanders and Rivers's study, 5th graders who had 3 years of teachers who were judged ineffective by their supervisors averaged 54 to 60 percentile points lower in achievement than did students who had teachers judged effective. And the results of the teacher effects (bad or good) carried forward and accumulated for as long as 2 years.

When you uncover a problem in the course of your observations, work with that staff member to remedy the deficiencies. There are occasions, however, when, in spite of all you do, a teacher remains ineffective. Escalating parental complaints, a continuing pattern of low student gain scores from year to year, and a growing collection of unsatisfactory evaluation ratings tell the story. That's when it's time to *literally* change the teacher: Reassign that individual to give them a new perspective, counsel with them regarding their career goals, or work with legal counsel to recommend dismissal.

Change the Amount of Time Students Spend Practicing What You Teach

> *A major characteristic that distinguishes experts from others is the sheer amount of deliberate practice in which experts engage.*
>
> —Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993)

My mother frequently reminded me during my teenage years that I had a lot to learn. Today's adolescents aren't much different than I was in terms of how much they have to learn, but what has changed is our understanding of the enormous potential for growth and learning in adolescents' brains (Begley, 2000). And the more practice that accompanies that learning, the better. One of the more interesting findings of the National Reading Panel (2000) in their investigation of high-quality experimental research on effective reading instruction was the value of repeated oral reading practice for students who are learning to read, whatever their age (pp. 3-20). One effective way to build fluency is through repeated readings in which a student reads and rereads a text over and over until a prespecified level of proficiency has been reached. Not only do repeated readings improve word recognition and fluency, "the impact of these procedures on comprehension (and on total reading scores) is not inconsiderable, and in several comparisons it was actually quite high" (pp. 3-18).

Guided oral reading is a second practice that although including rereading of text also includes direct teacher support.

> The teacher works with a small group of [students] who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar level of text with support. . . . The purpose of guided reading is to enable [students] to use and develop strategies "on the run." (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 2)

At the Boys Town Reading Center in Nebraska, students gather in groups of five or six, each with his or her own copy of the same book. Everyone takes a turn at reading, with turns passed among the members of the group the way a ball would be tossed to each other. During a 20-minute period, 8 to 10 pages of text usually get read, with each person in the group getting about eight turns in reading (Curtis & Longo, 1999, p. 27). The authors suggest several dozen books that their students have found appealing and are also at the appropriate level of difficulty for working with students who need oral reading practice (p. 29). For more information on the Boys Town Reading Center, see Resource B.

Change How You Assess What You Teach

Standardized assessments are here to stay. They provide an objective and cost-effective way to gauge generalized growth in reading. They cannot, however, tell us what a student's specific problem may be (e.g., decoding, comprehension, lack of fluency, or all of the above). That is why every school must have a comprehensive system for assessing students who give evidence of reading problems.

At the Boys Town Reading Center, every student is tested within a week of arrival using the Diagnostic Assessments of Reading (DAR) test (Roswell & Chall, 1992). The DAR is a criterion-referenced test that can be used to establish mastery levels (ranging from 1st- through 12th-grade levels) in six areas of reading and related language skills: (a) word recognition, (b) oral reading or connected text, (c) knowledge of word meanings, (d) silent reading comprehension, (e) spelling, and (f) word analysis (Curtis & Longo, 1999, p. 12). Once the DAR results are compiled, decisions are made about course assignments and the need for special help. Content area teachers are informed immediately of a student's reading skills so that accommodations can be made if needed. The students who come to Boys Town are typically 2 to 3 years behind in reading, and some are reading as many as 5 to 6 years below grade level.

Based on the DAR results, these students receive intensive services in the Boys Town Reading Center, a laboratory for older adolescents with reading problems. Students with word recognition difficulties receive direct instruction in word analysis along with computer and spelling-related instruction. Students with depressed vocabulary knowledge receive direct instruction in word meanings. Those with difficulties in comprehension are taught strategies and study skills. Some students receive simultaneous instruction in multiple areas; others begin at the beginning with word analysis and progress to reading a lot to gain fluency. Curriculum-based measures (i.e., procedures for assessing a student's ongoing performance with course content) are used weekly to determine progress toward goals. Results are discussed frankly with students who are usually grateful to have finally found someone who recognizes they have a problem, knows exactly what the problem is, and has a plan to solve the problem. For more information about the Boys Town Reading Center, see the discussion in Resource B.

Assessments, whether summative or formative should be used to improve performance. They provide a way to monitor learning closely; they can demonstrate what students still need to learn; and they can show us how we need to adjust instruction to ensure success.

Change Your Expectations for Students

> To assume that a problem is inherent in the learner leaves the teacher without any influence, because the problem is framed as being outside of the teacher's province of control (i.e., in the learner's head).
>
> —Kameenui and Simmons (1990, p. 13).

Conversation overheard in the faculty lounge of a small Midwestern high school:

Teacher 1 If kids aren't reading by 6th grade, they never will. So, no sense spending any time on it.

Teacher 2 When those kids finally decide they want to read, they'll buckle down and learn!

Some educators believe their students are incapable of meeting academic standards because of their demographics (e.g., poverty, limited English proficiency), low ability, or lack of motivation (laziness). Others have gradually lowered their expectations in response to pressure from parents who think their children need "less homework, more downtime, and a life outside of school" (Bempechat, 2000, p. 64). Still others have been seduced by the current wave of "self-esteem" proponents who preach that standards, pressure, hard work, frustration, challenges, and setbacks are somehow dangerous for adolescents.

Carol Jago (2000), high school English teacher in Santa Monica, CA, stands in sharp contrast to the educators I've just described. She gives reading assignments to her students that make the average high school English teacher cringe—*Crime and Punishment*, *Beowulf*, and *The Odyssey*. She expects, requires, and even demands hard work from her students. "What irks students," she reports, "is the work: paying attention, doing the reading, taking notes, studying for tests, writing papers. I don't blame them. But students who fail to discipline themselves to these onerous tasks learn very little." Jago is honest with her students. "Yes, *Crime and Punishment* is a very long book. It is also a heavy book. Get over it. Trust me. I would never assign this novel if it weren't a glorious story and if I didn't love it myself" (p. 27).

When teachers raise expectations, achievement improves. Consider these survey results from the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading (Donahue et al., 1999):

- At grades 4, 8, and 12, students who reported reading more pages daily in school and for homework had higher average scale scores than students who reported reading fewer pages daily. If you want to raise achievement, require students to read more (both for homework assignments and for recreational reading).

- At Grades 8 and 12, students who were asked by their teachers to explain their understanding and discuss interpretations of their reading at least once weekly had higher scores than students who reported doing so less than once weekly. If you want to raise achievement in reading, hold students accountable for understanding what they have read.
- At all grades, there was a positive relationship between writing long answers to questions on tests and assignments that involved reading and being held accountable for reading performance. If you want to raise achievement, expect students to write at length about what they have read.

There is one more trend that dilutes expectations for students—the notion that the students themselves should be in charge.

> An unfortunate effect of this strong emphasis on student choice has been that teachers, swept up in the enthusiasm of creating a learner-centered curriculum, often feel guilty when their instincts tell them to take some control over the structure of their classrooms or the content of student learning. While on the one hand teachers can never place too much emphasis on the worth and dignity of the individual learner and the empowering effects of personal choice, there are times when the curriculum should be negotiated and teachers must be empowered to lead students in directions they might not take on their own. (Hynds, 1997, p. 8)

Gregory Hodge, the principal of the Frederick Douglass Academy (Grades 7-12) in the central Harlem area of New York City, gives students few choices. He and his staff are focused on one goal: to get every graduate a full scholarship to college. Parents support Mr. Hodge; he gets results. Increasing numbers of students graduate from Frederick Douglass every year with scholarships to attend highly competitive and very prestigious universities. "You have to demand more of your students while providing them with the structure to meet those demands," says Hodge (Carter,1999, p. 15). He believes that how hard students work determines whether or not they will be successful. The Frederick Douglass Academy is a real-world example of what Lauren Resnick calls an "effort-based" school" (1999, p. 40).

Merely telling students to work harder is not enough, however. Most students who are failing have adopted the attitudes of some of their teachers: "I can't learn because I'm not smart." "Many low-achieving students deny the importance of learning and withhold the effort it requires in order to avoid the stigma of having tried and failed" (Tomlinson, 1992, p. 1). These reluctant students need to be shown specifically and directly that their learning difficulties are simply due to their lack of knowledge regarding the right strategies (or shortcuts to learning) to use and their own lack of effort. Borokowski, Carr, Rellinger, and Pressley (1990) believe that changing low-achieving students' beliefs about themselves as learners at the same time as providing direct instruction in the strategies used routinely by high-achieving students can have a profound effect on their achievement.

Students who have continually failed at learning to read need to be

- Taught to understand that their deficiencies are treatable
- Given general problem-solving skills and accompanying attributional and motivational components
- Explicitly taught (as opposed to merely having explained) specific strategies for a wide variety of tasks (Duffy et al., 1987)
- Given the opportunity to teach what they have learned to someone else in a reciprocal teaching situation (Borokowski et al., 1990, 77)

Lisa Delpit (1995) explains the importance of making sure that high expectations are always accompanied by excellent instruction:

> I do not advocate a simplistic "basic skills" approach for children outside of the culture of power. It would be (and has been) tragic to operate as if these children were incapable of critical and higher-order thinking and reasoning. Rather, I suggest that schools must provide these children the content that other families from a different cultural orientation provide at home. This does not mean separating children according to family background, but instead, ensuring that each classroom incorporate strategies appropriate for all the children in its confines. (p. 30)

Be alert for signs of lowered expectations. Watch for "those usually tacit but sometimes explicit agreements in which teachers lower their standards in exchange for classroom cooperation" (Tomlinson, 1992, p.13). Be on the look out for differences in the ways teachers treat low-achieving as opposed to high-achieving students.

> If teachers could learn to treat the majority of students in the engaging and challenging fashion in which they now treat high-achieving

> students, more students would develop academic expertise, and students would accomplish more tasks. When low-achieving students are explicitly taught to develop their self-directive capacities, and are provided with opportunities to help or consult with others, their own academic achievement improves. (Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1998, pp. 92-93)

Raising expectations requires changing the long-standing beliefs of *both* teachers and students and then expecting everyone to work harder than they have ever worked before.

Encourage your teachers to build in these critical messages for students:

- Trying hard fosters achievement and intelligence
- Failure is a natural part of learning
- Being best is not what school is about; getting better is (Pressley, 1998, p. 236)

Change How You Group to Teach

> The typical high school decides the worthy options available for all students and then counsels each student to take what appears to be the most sensible path. Each path is carefully demarcated. Detours and side-eddies are frowned upon. We must introduce more flexibility in the system. The goal of schooling should not be rote fulfillment of state requirements, but rather teaching in response to the ambitions of students to optimize their talents and make sense out of their experiences.
>
> —A. Jones (personal communication, May 26, 2000)

The question of how best to group students is a vexing one. "By the time students reach high school, they may differ by *as many as six grade levels* in their academic abilities" (Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1998, p. iii). Even though many of the books and journal articles written during the 1990s claim that mixed-ability groups are always more effective, an exhaustive review of the literature on grouping and student achievement reveals no valid research studies supporting that position. Mosteller, Light, and Sachs (1996) debunk the following grouping myths:

Myth 1: Research supports mixed-ability grouping over similar-ability grouping After an exhaustive examination of research studies that investigated skill grouping, the Harvard researchers concluded that "we cannot find a single large-scale, well designed experiment that follows students over several years to evaluate the impact of skill grouping" (p. 812). The few controlled field trials that have been conducted are dated and include few students. No compelling evidence supports either side of this important issue.

Myth 2: Mixed ability grouping raises self-esteem for lower-achieving students Mosteller and his colleagues were surprised to find that even in one study that determined that mixed-ability grouping was slightly more effective, the students in the mixed-ability groups were less engaged with their learning, as measured by how often they spoke in class. Students in skill-grouped classrooms tended to contribute to class discussions more frequently than those students who were in mixed-ability groups (p. 813).

The noncognitive data from the skill-grouping studies leaned in favor of skill grouping. "On student self-report measures, skill-grouped students produced higher scores than the whole-class groups, both for liking their school more and for the amount of self-perceived learning" (p. 810).

Myth 3: Mixed-ability grouping raises achievement levels more effectively for lower achieving students Most educators agree that instruction for lower-achieving students should adjust for their instructional needs through appropriate modifications and adaptations. Although many teachers are able to make the extensive modifications and adaptations to the curriculum that are needed in a mixed-ability group setting, more often than not, the teacher does not have the time or expertise to plan for that critical piece of the equation. The existing research further confuses this issue because the majority of studies that examine ability grouping patterns either examined classrooms in which the *same* instruction and the *same* methods were used for all ability-level groups or did not indicate if and how instruction and methods varied between the two groups. Sociologist James Rosenbaum (2000) describes the results of interviews with social studies teachers in a suburban Midwest public high school about their experiences with detracking: "All the teachers in the social studies department began the reform with great enthusiasm. They believed strongly in the principle of detracking and were eager to raise the performance of *all* the students in their detracked classrooms" (p. 25). As supportive and creative as these teachers were, however, they were profoundly disappointed with detracking because of three unanticipated outcomes: (a) Detracking presented them with unresolvable conflicts; (b) it imposed a uniformity that deprived faster students of challenge and slower students of mastery; and (c) it raised doubts about the legitimacy of their classes, even in the teachers' own minds (p. 25).

Faced with Solomon-like decisions, teachers reported being pulled in conflicting directions. Their faster students were frustrated by the lack of academic challenge, whereas their slower students needed frequent explanations and definitions. The teachers reported that the only students who didn't get neglected were the ones in the middle (p. 28).

Jeanne Oakes and her colleagues (Oakes & Wels, 1996) are detracking's most ardent cheerleaders. Although they identify three major obstacles to successful detracking (it is hard to do; teachers' beliefs prevent it; and the parents of faster students won't support it), they only deal substantively with the latter two, leaving administrators caught between the rock of political correctness and the hard place of declining achievement. As you make the tough decisions with regard to grouping, remember that without extraordinary resources at your command, "the technical challenges of providing high quality instruction to students at diverse performance levels are formidable obstacles for many teachers who wish to reduce the reliance on grouping and tracking" (Gamoran & Weinstein, 1998, p. 411). The teachers interviewed by Rosenbaum (2000) identified four problems that no teaching strategy can remedy:

> - Detracking does not abolish inequality among students; it ignores it.
> - Detracking forces teachers to ignore high-level topics.
> - When standards are lowered overall, students' further education may suffer.
> - Detracking may actually be harmful to low-income and minority youth who are high achievers. (pp. 28-29)

The solution to the grouping dilemma does not have to be a forced choice. Students need specialized instruction, *and* they need the opportunity to work in groups that reflect the heterogeneity of their school campus. If you're "off to see the wizard" to find the answer, cancel your trip. Look no further than your very talented and creative staff. They know what the problems are. Give them permission to design a grouping plan that will give all students access to the skills and content they need.

Goals at a Glance for Chapter 2

You are no doubt already thinking about changing what you can change. Figure 2.1, Goals at a Glance, recaps the 12 alterable variables. Before you take administrative action, however, consider the four strategies to be covered in the remaining chapters: (a) teach the students who can't read to read; (b) teach all students how to read to learn; (c) encourage every student to read more, read more challenging text, and be accountable for what is read; and (d) create a reading culture in your school.

FIGURE 2.1

Goals at a Glance: Twelve Alterable Variables

Twelve Alterable Variables

1. **Change how you state your goals.**

2. **Change how you choose what to teach.**

3. **Change the alignment of what you teach.**

4. **Change what you teach.**

5. **Change the amount of time you spend teaching it.**

6. **Change where you teach it.**

7. **Change how you teach it.**

8. **Change who is teaching it.**

9. **Change the amount of time students spend practicing what you teach.**

10. **Change how you assess what you teach.**

11. **Change your expectations for students.**

12. **Change how you group to teach.**

McEwan, E. K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: 5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals.*

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3

Teach the Students Who Can't Read How to Read

RECOMMENDED READING

McGuinness, Diane. (1997). *Why Our Children Can't Read and What You Can Do About It: A Scientific Revolution in Reading.* New York: Free Press. This book is a challenging but worthwhile read. It provides a short course in reading that you won't find today in any university. The content is thought provoking and mind stretching.

Curtis, Mary E., & Longo, Ann Marie. (1999). *When Adolescents Can't Read: Methods and Materials that Work.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline. This book is one of the most practical I've read to help you understand how to meet the needs of adolescents who can't read well or even read at all.

> Reason would tell almost anyone that the ability to read was the most difficult single accomplishment ever achieved by any man. But in this day people did not set off skyrockets and dance in the streets when their little boy tackled and subdued this Everest of culture at the age of nine or ten. Nor did they reward the kid's patient teacher with rubies and a crown of laurel. It was more like rubles and a crown of poison oak. Learning to read was taken with little more enthusiasm in the average family than the regular defrosting of the automatic refrigerator. Learning was expected; only failure to learn caused family comment.
>
> —Summers (1955, pp. 133-134)

How many students would you estimate enroll in the average kindergarten class each year already knowing how to read? I'm not talking about reading a few simple words but fluently reading the daily newspaper or an unfamiliar piece of children's literature. The hundreds of kindergarten teachers and principals to whom I've posed this question in the past 2 years report that it is a rare class that contains more than two or three students who can read; most classes have none. Steven Pinker summarizes the critical issue: "Children are wired for sound, but print is an optional accessory that must be painstakingly bolted on" (McGuinness, 1997, p. ix). We aren't alarmed by this state of affairs. After all, most kindergartners have had no formal reading instruction. We don't expect them to know how to read yet.

At the other end of the educational continuum, however, the question of how many students in your middle or high school's entering class can read a classic by Charles Dickens or even the daily newspaper is more than just academic. Some have been "learning to read" for years and still have "miles to go." Although standardized tests are much maligned for their inability to assess the total student, they can reveal serious generalized problems. Consider these results from just one question on a standardized reading comprehension test (Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1998, p. 2):

> "A plain, as all agree, is a great stretch of level or nearly level land."
>
> Question: What is true of all plains?
>
> Correct multiple-choice alternative: "They have no high mountains."

Two-thirds of entering high school students who took the test failed to answer the question correctly. To understand why many students cannot answer even this simple question requires an understanding of what the current research says about how students lean to read.

How Children Learn to Read: A Short Lesson

> *Reading is one of the most uniquely human and complex of all cognitive activities.*
>
> *—van den Broek and Kremer (2000, p. 1)*

There has never been a more exciting time to be involved in improving reading achievement. The publication of the National Reading Panel's (2000) report adds to a growing body of literature on what materials and methods can most effectively teach nearly every child to read.[1] In addition, there are increasing numbers of schools where outstanding instructional leaders and their teams of teachers are demonstrating that even the most at-risk students are capable of high achievement if exposed to the right combination of the variables (Carter, 1999). Figure 3.1 illustrates the reading process in a flowchart. Learning to read is a far more synergistic, interactive, and simultaneous process than can be depicted in a graphic such as this, but for purposes of this beginning discussion, we will keep it simple.

---

[1] The most current research of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development indicates that 93% to 95% of students can attain grade level if we define grade level achievement as the 30th percentile and above and if these students receive the right kind of instruction in Grades K-1. The right kind of instruction for the most at-risk students means 40 to 80 hours of one-to-one-instruction using research-based methods and materials (E. Bergman, personal communication, July 6, 2000).

One of the most exciting developments in reading instruction has occurred in the past two decades as researchers have shown that phonemic awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds of the language, is an essential prerequisite to mastering the sound-spelling correspondences (phonics). Students who fail to learn to read with phonics instruction, even excellent phonics instruction, are often shown to be deficient in phonemic awareness (PA). They lack the abilities to distinguish rhyming words, blend phonemes into words and hear the individual sounds in a word. They are sometimes diagnosed as dyslexic, slow learners, or learning disabled.

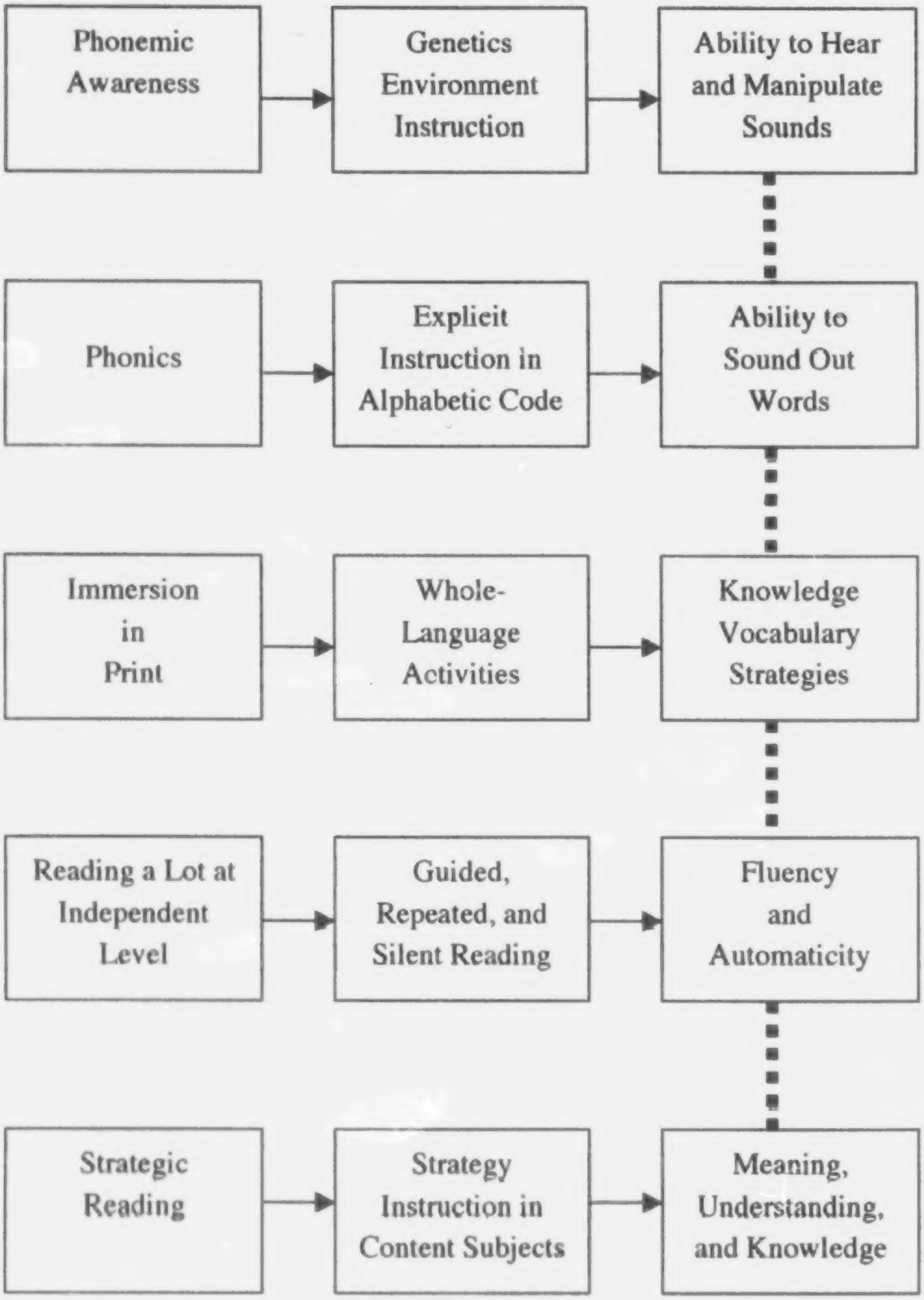
There are three ways students acquire PA: (a) inheriting genes that predispose one to distinguish and manipulate phonemes (sounds) without difficulty; (b) living in a print-rich environment where Mother Goose is a regular visitor to the nursery; or (c) good instruction. The fact that we *can* teach phonemic awareness to students who don't have it is the best news educators have had in a long time. The National Reading Panel (2000) reported the following, after an extensive investigation of the research:

> Teaching phonemic awareness to children is clearly effective. It improves their ability to manipulate phonemes in speech. This skill transfers and helps them learn to read and spell. PA training benefits not only word reading but also reading comprehension. PA training contributes to children's ability to read and spell for months, if not years after the training has ended. Effects of the PA training are enhanced when children are taught how to apply PA skills to reading and writing tasks. (pp. 2-40)

PA training is not just for kindergartners. The research shows that older disabled readers who have already developed reading problems can benefit from PA instruction as well (pp. 2-41). Excellent instruction using research-based methods and materials can overcome deficits of both nature and nurture.

Once students are able to hear and manipulate sounds (phonemes), they can then benefit from instruction in the sound-spelling correspondences (i.e., the alphabetic code or phonics). The National Reading Panel (2000) makes it clear that "systematic phonics instruction is significantly

FIGURE 3.1
How Children Learn to Read


Phonemic Awareness
Genetics Environment Instruction
Ability to Hear and Manipulate Sounds
Phonics
Explicit Instruction in Alphabetic Code
Ability to Sound Out Words
Immersion in Print
Whole-Language Activities
Knowledge Vocabulary Strategies
Reading a Lot at Independent Level
Guided, Repeated, and Silent Reading
Fluency and Automaticity
Strategic Reading
Strategy Instruction in Content Subjects
Meaning, Understanding, and Knowledge

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more effective than non-phonics instruction in helping to prevent reading difficulties among at-risk students and in helping to remediate reading difficulties in disabled readers" (pp. 2-86).

Before, during, and after students have learned to decode words, they should be exposed to a wide variety of children's literature and have ample opportunities to hear stories read aloud and discussed. Activities of the type usually characterized as "whole language" enhance students' vocabulary, general knowledge, and comprehension abilities. However, once students can independently decode words, they must read large amounts of decodable text at their independent reading level to develop fluency and automaticity.[2]

Students have not "arrived" just because they can decode, however. They must then achieve the ultimate goal of reading: "to understand the messages conveyed in the text" (Pressley, 1998, p. 142). The "essence of reading," according to Durkin (1993), is comprehension. Three important ideas emerged from the National Reading Panel's (2000) examination of the research on comprehension:

> 1) Reading comprehension is a cognitive process that integrates complex skills and cannot be understood without examining the critical role of vocabulary learning and instruction and its development; 2) active interactive strategic processes are critically necessary to the development of reading comprehension; and 3) the preparation of teachers to best equip them to facilitate these complex processes is critical and intimately tied to the development of reading comprehension. (p. 4)

Reading comprehension is "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader" (Durkin, 1993). Comprehension is something that happens in the mind of the reader and concerns not only what is in the text but also the experiences and prior knowledge a reader brings to the text. Can students actually be taught to comprehend? Does that teaching result in higher reading achievement? The National Reading Panel (2000) answered both questions with a resounding "yes." They concluded that "comprehension instruction can effectively motivate and teach readers to learn and to use comprehension strategies that benefit the reader . . . and show general gains on standardized comprehension tests" (pp. 4-6).

The flowchart in Figure 3.1 provides one way to examine the process of learning to read. Jeanne Chall's (1986) theory of reading development is a more comprehensive developmental model. It includes five stages and suggests a continuum on which to place the students in your school. As we consider the five stages, think of the students in your school and where they might fall along this continuum. Furthermore, reflect on what is being done instructionally to move them from the stage in which they are currently reading to the next one. We should never stop working toward the vision of having all students reach Stage 5, the most proficient stage, but our short-term goals *must* focus on moving each student from wherever he or she is currently reading to the next higher stage. That goal is readily attainable. We know how to do it. The question is this: How do we feel about the fact that we haven't done it so far?

---

[2] Current reading programs skimp on decodable texts and thus limit the amount of practice that a significant number of students need to develop some semblance of fluency. Without a large number of decodable texts (books) in which to practice newly learned skills, a student's ability to develop fluency and automaticity is severely hampered (E. Bergman, personal communication, July 6, 2000).

If you have preschoolers at your house, they are likely to be in the *prereading stage*. Readers in this stage of development are able to repeat materials that have been read to them over and over, particularly if those books are predictable and contain lots of rhyming words. Although they are not really reading yet, in the sense of identifying words on the page, prereaders are able to engage in "pretend reading" because they understand that books have meaning. They also know that groups of letters written on a page stand for words. Most adolescents, but certainly not all, have made it beyond this stage.

Readers in the *decoding stage* are beginning to associate letters with sounds and spoken words with printed ones. Because they are still in the process of learning how to sound out words, however, Stage 1 readers are able to read only a fraction of the words whose meanings they know. Many adolescents, particularly in very-low-achieving schools, are still in the decoding stage. They are easily frustrated and do a lot of guessing if they even try to read. Because they are unable to read the literature or textbooks on their grade level, they often either "act out" or "tune out" in class. These adolescents would rather be seen as students who won't read than as students who can't read.

Readers in the *confirmation stage* are becoming fluent in dealing with print. Chall (1983/1986) refers to this process as "ungluing" (i.e., becoming less and less dependent on having to painstakingly sound out each word and able to focus more of their attention on the meaning of what has been read). Rate of reading increases steadily for students who move through this stage without difficulty. By the end of Stage 2, students are able to read and understand about 3,000 words and about 9,000 words can be understood when heard. Adolescents in Stage 2 read slowly and are often teased by their peers when "caught" reading easy books.

The *reading to learn stage* marks a transition from learning to read to an emphasis on using reading as a tool for learning new information (i.e., reading to learn). Readers in this stage are able to decode in a fairly automatic way. As such, they may be able to read words for which they do not know the meanings. Adolescents in this stage of reading development may also begin to encounter words that, although somewhat familiar, have not been mastered. Without a great deal of teacher assistance, adolescents in this phase may tune out during difficult content area instruction and appear to be "lazy" and unmotivated.

Students in the *multiple viewpoints stage* are able to read and understand a broad range of materials. Still developing, however, is their ability to integrate the different viewpoints and perspectives they experience through their reading. They are also in the process of acquiring the ability to use a number of different sources of reading materials as a way to answer questions and to solve problems. Stage 4 reading usually develops during high school if the appropriate instruction is provided and students read a sufficient quantity and quality of text.

In the final stage, *construction and reconstruction*, readers are able to use reading for their personal and professional needs in such a way that their prior knowledge gets synthesized and analyzed by what they read. Few high school students reach Stage 5 reading. According to Chall (1983/1986), getting to this stage may be the most difficult transition of all, because it depends on broad knowledge of the content being read, a high degree of efficiency in reading it, and the courage and confidence to form an opinion (Curtis & Longo, 1999, pp. 8-10)

Failing to Learn

> My students . . . taught me as much as I taught them, and their strongest lesson was a frightening one: adolescents who have not been successful—have failed—in traditional classrooms are at risk. Unless we find ways to engage them, they will shut down. If we continue to focus only on identifying deficits and devising sterile remedies, these students will surely use their energy and talent for unproductive purposes—or not at all.
>
> —Krogness (1995, p. 1)

Why do so many students fail to learn to read well or even to learn at all? There are dozens of possible reasons: lack of PA skills, a learning disability, attendance in multiple schools, ineffective teachers in kindergarten or 1st grade, ineffective methodologies, truancy, or emotional-behavioral problems are just a few. Students with reading difficulties will have one or more of the following three "big" problems that need immediate attention: (a) inability to decode, spell, and pronounce words; (b) inability to use already learned decoding skills to rapidly process words (i.e., lack of reading fluency); and (c) inability to comprehend either written or oral content.

Students with severe deficits may already be labeled as dyslexic, learning disabled, or behavior disordered, as was Robert, the young man you met in Chapter 1. These students have been "taught" by so many different teachers (e.g., classroom, remedial, special education, outside tutors, or their parents) using so many different methodologies, they are convinced that *they* are the problem, not the method or the teacher. They are confused, frustrated, and often very angry. The reading deficits of these students will *not* be remediated by any of the following four "Band-Aid" approaches: (a) placement with proficient readers in heterogeneous classes, (b) placement in cooperative groups, (c) placement in tutoring programs with volunteers, or (d) placement in remedial reading taught by a paraprofessional. Students with reading disabilities need direct, intense, research-based instruction that meets their specific needs. They need small groups or even one-to-one settings in which to learn, and they need to be taught by highly skilled and nurturing teachers. Students with the most severe reading disabilities will require at least 80 hours of intensive one-to-one instruction from highly trained professional staff to learn to read (E. Bergman, Director of Texas Reading Clinic, personal communication, July 6, 2000). Meeting the needs of these students will be costly and time consuming but much less expensive than dealing with the social costs of illiteracy.

Exemplary Programs

> One of the most heartbreaking sights in American schools today is that of children—once so eager to read—discovering that they are not learning how. There comes over those sparkling eyes a glaze of listless despair. We are not talking about a few children and scattered schools. We are talking about millions of children and every school in the nation. And the toll in young spirits is the least of it. The toll in the learning and thinking potential of our citizenry is beyond measure.
>
> —Sylvia Farnham-Diggory (as quoted in Spalding & Spalding, 1957/1990, p. 10)

There are several outstanding programs that have the potential to meet the needs of adolescents with reading difficulties. Resource B contains descriptions of four that have been validated by extensive program evaluations and are being used with success in schools around the country, particularly in challenging settings: (a) The Reading Is FAME program of the Boys Town Reading Center at Father Flanagan's Boys Home (NE); (b) Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes programs for phonemic awareness, spelling, and reading comprehension; (c) The Spalding Method; and (d) Corrective Reading. These programs offer comprehensive staff development support and, in most cases, on-site facilitation and supervision. All of the programs will meet the needs of nonreaders or students reading below the 4th grade level.

What Does a Good One Look Like? Remedial Reading in High School

There are many educators who resist the adoption of a "packaged" remedial program, believing an eclectic program developed by a gifted teacher with the ability to combine a variety of methods and programs can more effectively meet the needs of their students. The reading program at the Frontier Continuation High School (in Camarillo, CA) is one such program. Frontier is an alternative high school of over 400 students, serving the Oxnard Union High School District. The adolescents who attend Frontier have been referred from one of the district's six comprehensive high schools because of unsatisfactory attendance patterns, a troubled disciplinary history, lack of academic success, or the need for a more flexible schedule. Frontier is their last hope of staying in school and earning a regular high school diploma. Linda Nielsen teaches five ability-grouped sections of reading at Frontier to students ranging in level from 2nd grade to 7th grade. She brings a variety of experiences and training to the job: early childhood specialist, administrator, staff developer, and ESL teacher. She uses every strategy, trick, and tool she has, to make reading come alive for her students, many of whom would rather be anywhere than in school.

Linda loves her job, however, and credits her assistant principal, Yvonne Peck, with providing the leadership and resources to give her smooth sailing. "I needed some equipment and Yvonne found the money," reported Linda. "I really wanted more books for independent reading, and she somehow found the funds for those, too. But the biggest thing she's done for me," explained Linda, "is to make things happen organizationally."

> I desperately wanted the referring high schools to test students before they arrived on our campus so that we could be ready to teach them on day one. Yvonne worked with the principals at our six comprehensive high schools and got all of them to agree to have the reading test administered by one of their staff members so that we wouldn't waste a minute of instructional time.

Linda's job is beyond challenging. Her class load can be as high as 25 students, and to make life even more interesting, many of her students have sporadic attendance patterns. Motivating them to attend school is just the beginning. Then, she has to convince them that it's not a matter of how smart they are but how hard they're willing to work that will make the difference between their success and failure. She doesn't have time to "fight" the system for what she needs to get her job done and is grateful for a strong instructional leader like Yvonne to take those worries off her shoulders.

Linda's curriculum, although eclectic in nature, is based on solid research regarding what works in reading instruction. Phonics instruction and review are a part of each class. To make sure her students learn the essential decoding skills, Linda uses the Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (Lindamood & Lindamood, 1998), *The Writing Road to Reading* (Spalding & Spalding, 1990), and a program she brought with her from her 1st-grade teaching days, Sing, Spell, Read and Write (Dickson, 2000).

To help students enhance their memory and comprehension skills, she uses *Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking* (Bell, 1986). Linda uses the reciprocal teaching strategy (see Chapter 4) and emphasizes a core group of cognitive strategies. The students are taught new vocabulary using *504 Absolutely Essential Words* (Bromberg, Liebb, Traiger, & Jackson, 1995) and engage in a variety of reading and writing activities with the words throughout the week.[3] Daily instruction on prefixes, suffixes, and root words using *Making Big Words: Multilevel, Hands-On Spelling and Phonics Activities* (Cunningham & Hall, 1994) is also provided.[4]

After the first 3 to 4 weeks of the trimester, 15 minutes of each class is reserved for silent reading. Students are expected to fill out a reading log after each silent reading session and are responsible for choosing a sentence or phrase from the book they are reading and explaining why that phrase is important to the story. Each student is also responsible for reading 300 pages of outside reading during the trimester. To work on fluency, each student chooses a short children's book or a nonfiction article and continues to practice reading it to partners during the trimester (L. Nielsen, personal communication, April 21, 2000 and June 30, 2000).

Goals at a Glance for Chapter 3

Learning to read happens seemingly overnight for a few fortunate children, but most need far more than just exposure to books and immersion in print to learn how to read. They need superior instruction using research-based methods and materials. Figure 3.2 provides a snapshot of the learning-to-read process that will help you and your faculty understand what needs to happen, both in your school and in your feeder schools, to raise reading achievement in your school. Once students have mastered the learning-to-read process, they are ready to read to learn, the subject of Chapter 4.

---

[3] I have reviewed *504 Absolutely Essential Words* and find that it would also be an ideal resource for ESL students who need to improve their English skills. Another book in the series, *601 Words You Need to Know to Pass Your Exam* (Bromberg & Liebb, 1997), is perfect for enhancing the vocabulary skills at a higher level and preparing students for the ACT and SAT tests.

[4] Other books in the series include two volumes for younger readers: *Making Words* (Cunningham, Hall, & Heggie, 1994) and *Making More Words* (Cunningham & Hall, 2000) and a companion volume for older readers, *Making More Big Words* (Cunningham, 1997).

FIGURE 3.2
Goals at a Glance: Learning to Read

Learning to Read: The Essentials for Every Child

Phonemic Awareness: the ability to hear and manipulate sounds

Phonics: the ability to sound out (decode) and spell words using the 44 sound-spelling correspondences

Immersion in Print: the development of knowledge, vocabulary, and simple comprehension strategies prior to learning how to read independently

Reading a Lot: the development of fluency and automaticity in reading

Strategic Reading Ability: the ability to gain meaning, understanding, and knowledge from the printed page

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4

Teach Every Student How to Read to Learn

RECOMMENDED READING

Gaskins, I. W., & Elliot, T. T. (1991). *Implementing Cognitive Strategy Instruction Across the School: The Benchmark Manual for Teachers.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

Pressley, M. et al. (1990). *Cognitive Strategy Instruction that Really Improves Children's Academic Performance.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

Wood, E., Woloshyn, V. E., & Willoughby, T. (Eds.). (1995). *Cognitive Strategy Instruction for Middle and High Schools.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline

These three volumes are chock full of helpful information about teaching cognitive strategies in the classroom as well as implementing a schoolwide program. If you want to develop and implement a schoolwide "reading to learn" program, these authors can show you how.

> Strategic behavior improves learning.
> Strategic behavior can be taught.
> Strategic behavior can be learned.
>
> —Paris (1985)

Do you remember the last time you had a comprehension break down? I remember mine vividly. The occasion was the purchase of a scanner and text recognition software. It was as if the assembly directions and documentation were written in a foreign language. I had never heard of optical character recognition, scanner drivers, or drag-and-drop functionality. I gave myself a pep talk. "I can figure this out on my own." I dipped into my bag of comprehension strategies to jump-start the process. I reread parts of the text several times, used the glossary, thought aloud, and highlighted some key points. I no doubt used several other strategies of which I was not even aware. Gradually, the text began to make sense—but only because I am a strategic reader. I know when my reading is "clicking" (i.e., I understand), and I can tell when it's "clunking," (i.e., I'm lost); I have a repertoire of fix-up or "repair" strategies (Johnston, 1983) on which to draw.

Many middle and high school students are not so fortunate. They experience comprehension breakdowns constantly and have no idea how to prevent or fix them. They stare blankly at the printed page, hoping for a miracle, but it never comes. We must *teach them how to read to learn.* "It is strange that we expect students to learn yet seldom teach them about learning" (Norman, 1980, p. 97).

Reading has been defined in many ways since it first became the object of intense educational and psychological research at the turn of the century. In the 1970s, however, reading comprehension began to be thought of differently, not as a discrete skill but as "the interaction of text and the knowledge possessed by the reader to produce meaning" (National Academy of Education, 1985, p. 8). Cognitive scientists turned their unique spotlight on reading and showed us that meaning does not come without the involvement and engagement of the reader. More recently, van den Broek & Kremer (2000) described what happens during reading comprehension thusly: "Readers construct a mental 'picture' of the text: a representation in memory of the textual information and its interpretation" (p. 2).

Whether the goal of reading is defined as "meaning," or a "mental picture," scholars now consider the act of reading to be intentional thinking (Durkin, 1993). Although the first step to gaining meaning from print is undeniably the ability to rapidly and fluently decode words, the skillful use of comprehension (i.e., cognitive) strategies during the act of reading is just as critical. Some describe this ability as *strategic reading* or *strategic learning.* Others call it simply "reading to learn." All middle and high school students will encounter challenging reading during their academic careers: a physics or science textbook, the state reading assessment, or a literary classic. The big question is, what will they do when the reading gets tough: give up or get strategic? At this point, far too many of them are giving up.

In the chapter ahead, we'll consider how the incorporation of strategic reading instruction into the curriculum of your middle or high school can raise reading achievement. We'll look at what expert readers do during the act of reading, determine how we can train teachers to assist all students to gain these skills, and look at three exemplary strategy programs that have potential for raising achievement.

Cognitive Strategies: The Key to Meaning in the Act of Reading

> The best way to pursue meaning is through the conscious, controlled use of strategies.
>
> —Duffy (1993, p. 223)

Cognitive strategies can be thought of as mental tools, tricks, or shortcuts to gaining meaning, understanding, or knowledge. Duffy and Roehler (1987) called them "plans [that] readers use flexibly and adaptively depending on the situation" (p. 415). They are also defined as "behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986, p. 315). "Behaviors" could include note taking, constructing a graphic organizer, previewing the text, looking back to check on an answer, writing a summary, retelling a story, or thinking aloud. "Thoughts" might include processes like activating prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension, or inferring meaning.

Strategies have the power to enhance and enlarge the scope of learning by making it more efficient. Strategic students learn and remember more in shorter periods of time with far less frustration. They are able to tackle assignments with a higher level of organizational skill, and more important, they face challenging assignments with confidence. Figure 4.1 graphically presents the thoughts and behaviors of strategic readers. This web illustrates the vast and varied cognitive activities routinely used by skilled readers to gain meaning.

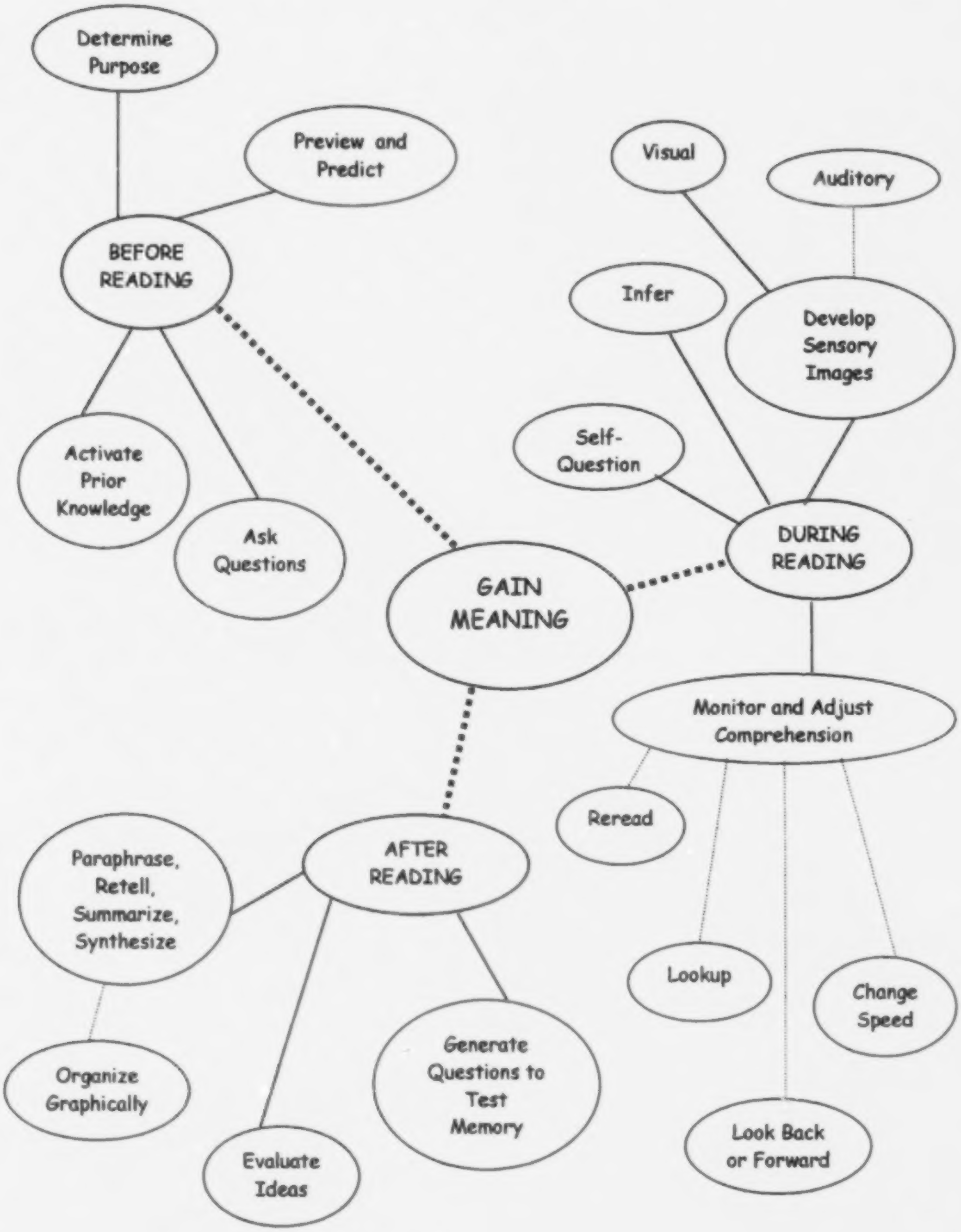
What happens to the students who reach middle and high school with few or no cognitive strategies in their repertoire? How are they to deal with multiple textbooks (some poorly organized and badly written), lectures, assignments, projects, and tests? What if their teachers assume that it's not *their* job to teach students how to learn. These unfortunate students are destined to become casualties of an academic "survival of the fittest." Strategic learners survive academically. The rest struggle or fail.

The Strategic Teacher

> I am convinced that if we are to take children into the upper reaches of comprehension we have to have been there ourselves. How can we teach children to synthesize ideas if we won't do this with our own reading?
>
> —Donald Graves (as quoted in Keene & Zimmermann, 1997, pp. x-xi)

Mature and skilled readers who use cognitive strategies regularly in their reading know how valuable they can be. Some of us were fortunate enough to inherit a genetic predisposition for organized and strategic thought. A few of us received quality instruction at some point in our academic careers.

FIGURE 4.1
The Strategic Reader


Determine Purpose
Preview and Predict
BEFORE READING
Activate Prior Knowledge
Ask Questions
Visual
Auditory
Infer
Develop Sensory Images
Self-Question
DURING READING
GAIN MEANING
Monitor and Adjust Comprehension
Reread
Lookup
Change Speed
Look Back or Forward
AFTER READING
Paraphrase, Retell, Summarize, Synthesize
Organize Graphically
Evaluate Ideas
Generate Questions to Test Memory

McEwan, E. K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: 5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals.*
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Most of us developed our strategies the old-fashioned way—through trial and error. We wasted our energies and endured unnecessary frustration and often failure. Strategic learners do not spontaneously bloom in classrooms. They have been taught, nurtured, and encouraged by strategic teachers, those individuals who are able to weave cognitive strategy and content area instruction into a seamless whole. In today's middle and high schools, every teacher must be a strategic teacher.

Attempting to teach content to students without simultaneously providing strategy instruction is like offering food to hungry diners but failing to provide them with the necessary dinnerware. The skillful union of content and strategy instruction is a powerful aid to learning, a marriage that should delight all content area teachers who love their discipline and want every student to appreciate and master it. There is one catch, however. "Becoming an effective . . . strategies instruction teacher takes several years" (Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder, 1996, p. 20).

Mike Simmons is just such a teacher. At the beginning of each school year, he introduces his freshman World History students to the concept of strategic reading. He asks them, "What do effective readers actually do when they read? What habits make them able to comprehend, analyze, and interpret a text? How do they make sense of challenging material?"

After a brief discussion, he models strategic reading and thinking for his students. To do this, he reads aloud from an unfamiliar (to both him and his students), challenging text. His choice for the lesson we are observing is the preface to Immanuel Kant's (1907) *Critique of Pure Reason*. Mr. Simmons is reading aloud when we slip into the classroom. During his reading, he frequently thinks out loud, pausing to question, reflect, paraphrase, reread, and look back. Students hear him articulate what is going through his mind. He asks the students to take notes during his reading, not on the content of the text but rather on his efforts to gain meaning from what he reads. After approximately 5 minutes of reading aloud alternated with thinking aloud, the class generates a list of Mr. Simmons's thoughts and behaviors. According to the class, Mr. Simmons did the following:

- Thought about the meaning and importance of what he was reading
- Put the author's words into his own words
- Tried to figure out what new words meant from how they were used in the text
- Thought about how what he was reading applied to his own life
- Figured out how to pronounce new words using decoding skills, root words, suffixes, and prefixes
- Kept on reading even when he didn't completely understand the text hoping that he would understand more as he kept reading
- Looked back to clarify something that was confusing
- Reread parts of the text

- Predicted what the author would say next
- Used knowledge he already had to help him understand something new
- Picked out the main idea
- Reacted to the things he read by asking questions, getting excited about a point the author made, or disagreeing with the author
- Visualized what he was reading

After Mr. Simmons and the students talked about the list they had generated, he gave them a brief reading assignment and then asked them to think aloud with a partner after reading it.

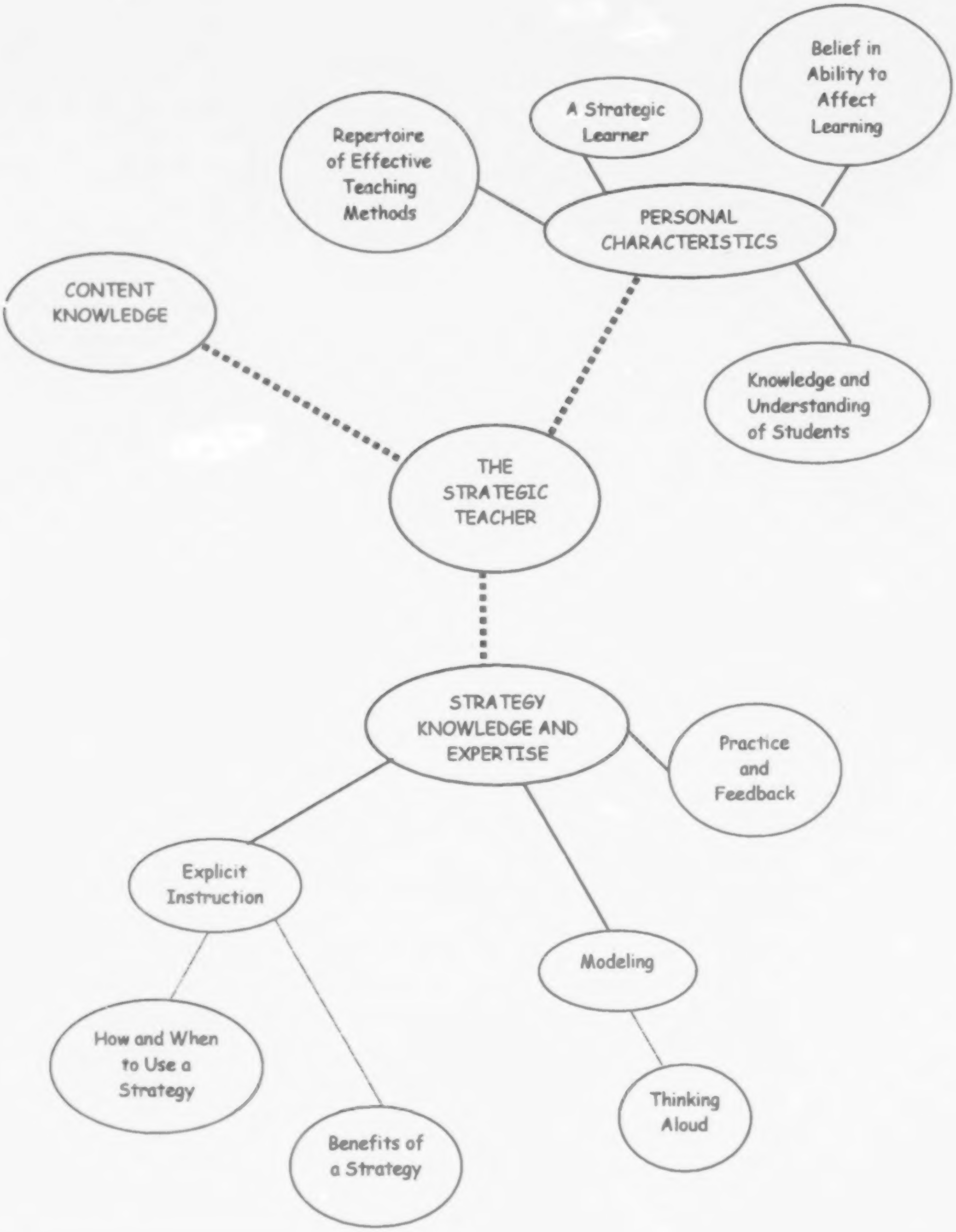
During his year-long World History course, he will not only teach the required content, he will teach his students how to learn the content in more efficient and effective ways. He will teach one strategy at a time, introducing a new one only when his students are well on their way to mastering the previous one. He will continue to model the use of all of the strategies for his students but will gradually expect them to choose appropriate ones for use on their own. His goal is to help students understand and remember the content of his course in more effective ways than they would have if taught through typical lectures and class discussions (M. Arest, personal communication, June, 2000).

Mr. Simmons exemplifies the strategic teacher as pictured in Figure 4.2. This graphic organizer shows that comprehensive content knowledge is only one aspect of being a successful strategic teacher. In addition to his content mastery, Mr. Simmons is also proficient at providing explicit cognitive strategy instruction to students. Explicit instruction includes modeling, explaining, providing practice, giving feedback, supplying the rationale for choosing a given strategy, and demonstrating the specific settings in which the strategy is most applicable. The strategic teacher also possesses personal characteristics that set him or her apart from the nonstrategic teacher, such as the following:

- A wide variety of teaching methods
- A personal ability to use cognitive strategies in his or her own reading
- An intimate knowledge of students' motivations and needs
- A belief in his or her ability to affect the learning of students

Training and developing strategic teachers requires a not inconsiderable investment of human and monetary resources. Teaching reading strategies is a vastly different undertaking from teaching the "skills" as we did in the 1960s and 1970s. Skills are "procedures readers over-learn through repetition so that speed and accuracy are assured every time the response is called for" (Duffy & Roehler, 1987, p. 415), whereas strategies,

FIGURE 4.2
The Strategic Teacher



Belief in Ability to Affect Learning
A Strategic Learner
Repertoire of Effective Teaching Methods
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE
Knowledge and Understanding of Students
THE STRATEGIC TEACHER
STRATEGY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE
Practice and Feedback
Explicit Instruction
Modeling
How and When to Use a Strategy
Thinking Aloud
Benefits of a Strategy

McEwan, E. K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: 5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals.*
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on the other hand, tap higher-order thinking skills in response to the demands of unique reading tasks. Strategies are used situationally. Teaching students how and when to use them is a vastly different enterprise than drilling students on a discrete skill or serving up a smorgasbord of content and expecting students to help themselves.

"Helping teachers [become good strategy teachers] will require a significant change in how teacher educators and staff developers work with teachers and what they count as important about learning to be a teacher" (Duffy, 1993, pp. 244-245). The process will take far more than a day or two of casual staff development because most teachers did not experience this kind of instruction themselves. Irene Gaskins, the founder and director of The Benchmark School says it takes teachers at least 3 years to become strategic teachers (I. Gaskins, personal communication, July 5, 2000).

Collins, Brown, and Holum (1991) observed that the practice of strategic reading is not at all obvious in most classrooms, where "the processes of thinking are often invisible to both the students and the teacher" (p. 6). That may have more to do with the difficulty of becoming a strategic teacher than with any difficulty students might have in learning how to comprehend if only they were well taught. Teaching comprehension is hard work. It is much easier to talk about the importance of comprehension or the need for testing comprehension than it is to actually teach it. In a year-long series of observations in ten 4th- and 5th-grade classrooms, Pressley (1998) found a disturbing lack of comprehension instruction, despite over two decades of research on how to do it and the benefits students derive from it (p. 198).

The same deficiencies that the researcher noted in his study are no doubt evident in the classrooms of your school. Oh, you may see a smattering of study skills lessons or a frenzy of test preparation activities just prior to the state tests. Students typically read a few brief selections, answer some questions, get a low score, receive a canned lecture about the importance of "thinking" about what they're reading, and then begin the cycle all over again the next day. To break out of this mind-numbing waste of instructional time, teachers need sufficient and well-developed training in how to teach cognitive strategies, opportunities to practice using the strategies in their own reading and thinking, ample amounts of coaching and follow-up in their classrooms, and administrative expectations that the strategies will be taught.

The typical approach to strategy instruction in most middle and high schools is often haphazard. Someone, typically an administrator or the reading teacher, becomes aware of the power of cognitive strategies to improve reading achievement and convenes a committee to design a staff development program. The strategies chosen for implementation are often selected at random, based on the preferences of the teacher who will be doing the training. They may or may not be bundled as a multiple-strategy instruction program. Teachers may not see the relevance of a particular strategy to their discipline or understand the importance of modeling strategies to students and emphasizing the motivational aspects of effective strategy instruction. Furthermore, implementation schedules are often too ambitious, leaving teachers undertrained and overwhelmed.

> In spite of heavy emphasis on modeling and metacognitive instruction, even very good teachers may have trouble implementing, and may even omit, crucial aspects of strategic reasoning. The research suggests that, when partially implemented, students of strategy teachers will still improve. But it is not easy for teachers to develop readers' conceptions about what it means to be strategic. It takes time and careful monitoring to help both teachers and students to be successful. (National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 4-49)

The Essential Strategies

> Every book has a skeleton hidden between its covers. Your job as an analytical reader is to find it. A book comes to you with flesh on its bare bones and clothes over its flesh. It is all dressed up. You do not have to undress it or tear the flesh off its limbs to get at the firm structure that underlies the soft surface. But you must read the book with X-ray eyes, for it is an essential part of your apprehension of any book to grasp its structure.
>
> —Adler & Van Doren (1972, p. 75)

The generic cognitive strategies that all strategic readers are known to employ (e.g., comprehension monitoring, generation of questions, and inference) were displayed in Figure 4.1. You may also be familiar with a variety of "name brand" strategies that have been developed by teachers, reading educators, and staff developers. They are frequently the topics of articles in popular journals (Jones, Pierce, & Hunter, 1998-1999), workshops (Farr, 1998), and countless books (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Johns & Lenski, 1997; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). These name-brand varieties are given "cute" titles like "click or clunk," in which after reading a portion of text, students ask themselves if what they have read clicks (i.e., they understand it) or clunks—they need to use a fix-up strategy (Weaver, 1994, p. 157). Another cleverly named strategy helps students distinguish between "thick [large global] questions or thin [small clarification] questions," (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000, p. 90).

Name-brand strategies are usually taught in 1-day "make and take" workshops for teachers and present three major problems: (a) They are often taught with little or no connection to the teacher's discipline, (b) they are taught as a stand-alone strategy rather than as part of a well-conceived multiple-strategy package, and (c) teachers are led to believe that teaching cognitive strategies to students is just another enjoyable reading "activity," rather than a rigorous, lengthy, and ongoing process, one that requires a major commitment of time and intellectual energy. If I were leading teachers and students in a middle or high school today, I would expect every teacher to integrate content and strategy instruction in every lesson plan—day after day, year after year. But I would hire a full-time staff member experienced in teaching both students and teachers to model, coach, and mentor. My vision for the future would include an extensive strategic reading across the curriculum program, but I would begin with the following core group of strategies.

Prediction

Prediction is about the ability to guess what's coming, to draw conclusions, or to make inferences about the text. Prediction calls for reading between the lines and making judgments based not only on what is read in the text but on the basis of personal experience and background knowledge.

Question Generation

When students generate their own questions before and during reading, their comprehension improves. Several brand-name strategies incorporate question generation into their lesson plans. For example, the ReQuest strategy (Manzo, 1969), has the teacher and students take turns reading text and asking and answering questions. Teacher modeling of both question generation and question answering continues until students begin to use the strategy effectively.

Question Answering

Asking questions is a part of what teachers do. "Answer the questions at the end of the chapter." "Who can tell me why Rebecca ran from home?" The point of questioning students is to get them to reprocess the text, increasing their likelihood of remembering what they have read. When they don't know the answers to the questions, this reprocessing is essential. Although answering questions was shown to improve learning for adults (Anderson & Biddle, 1975), it never seemed to work in experiments with younger students or poor readers—that is, until researchers discovered younger students and poor readers never considered looking back in the text for an answer they didn't know. If they didn't know, they gave up. Students need to be taught the "look back" strategy that shows them how to go back to text they have already read to look for specific answers. Students also need to be taught which are the most logical places to look for answers to specific kinds of questions (Pressley et al., 1990, pp. 73-76).

Summarization

One of the most difficult assignments for most students, whether in kindergarten or college, is writing or orally giving summaries of what they have read—that is, unless they have been taught how to do it (Brown & Day, 1983; Brown, Day, & Jones, 1983). Summarization instruction improves children's recall of what they read compared to children who are taught using traditional reading comprehension instruction (Armbruster et al., 1987; Berkowitz, 1986; Taylor & Beach, 1984). Summarization training is a powerful intervention, with many variations of the technique improving long-term memory of text (Pressley et al., 1990, p. 62).

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers, sometimes called *graphic* or *visual representations*, "help the leaner to comprehend, summarize, and synthesize complex ideas in ways that, in many instances, surpass verbal statements" (Van Patten, Chao, & Reigluth, 1986, p. 437). At the minimum, students should understand and be able to use in their own reading and writing the following: flow charts, Venn diagrams, webs, time lines, and continuums. Johns and Lenski (1997) provide templates of multiple graphic organizers that may be reproduced for educational purposes. Jones et al. (1988-1989) offer a discussion and examples of the most important graphic organizers. The National Reading Panel (2000) found that

> teaching students to use a systematic, visual graphic to organize the ideas that they are reading about develops the ability of the students to remember what they read and may transfer in general to better comprehension and achievement in social studies and science content areas. (pp. 4-75)

A Model for Multiple-Strategy Instruction

> Despite a significant body of research in the 1980's suggesting the effectiveness of strategy instruction, especially for lower-achieving readers, strategy instruction has not been implemented in many American classrooms.
>
> —Dole (2000, p. 62)

Cognitive strategy instruction as a field of study and research has become increasingly more sophisticated during the past 20 years. Researchers, intrigued with the success of a single strategy to improve comprehension, have gone on to combine several strategies to produce even more powerful results. The National Reading Panel (2000) concurs with Rosenshine, Meister, and Chapman (1996) that "the data suggests that students at all skill levels would benefit from being taught these strategies [e.g., prediction, clarification, question generation, and summarization]" (p. 201).

Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching was the first multiple-strategy intervention that was shown to promote reading comprehension (Palincsar & Brown, 1986). This multiple-strategy approach when taught to students enables them to (a) make predictions about what is going to be in the text, (b) generate questions about the text content, (c) seek clarification of points that are not well understood or confusing, and (d) summarize what has been read (Pressley et al.,1990, p. 84). Students then discuss the text as they apply the strategies, with one student playing the role of discussion facilitator. Because of its relative ease of implementation, it has been a popular "bundled" strategy package. The biggest challenge for administrators and staff developers with regard to strategy instruction is that being strategic is much more than knowing a few or even a great many individual strategies. Strategy use is not a "paint by the numbers" activity. "When faced with a comprehension problem, strategic readers coordinate and shift strategies as appropriate. They constantly alter, adjust, modify, and test until they construct meaning and the problem is solved" (National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 4-47). What is needed is a model that (a) allows for the ambiguity and messiness that occurs during "real" reading, (b) helps teachers deal with constant decision making and unanticipated actions and reactions, (c) encourages teachers to become strategic readers themselves in the "each one teach one" tradition, and (d) allows time for them to become expert. Transactional strategies instruction provides such a model.

Transactional Strategies Instruction

Transactional strategies instruction (TSI) had its genesis in three educator-developed programs: The Benchmark School described in Resource C and two public school programs. A transaction is commonly thought of as an exchange of money for goods or a business deal between two people, but the transactions that occur in transactional strategies instruction have to do with members of a group (including the teacher) using strategies to exchange ideas and jointly construct meaning from a text.

> The long-term goal of transactional strategies instruction is the internalization and consistently adaptive use of strategic comprehension processes whenever students encounter demanding text. The short-term goal is deep understanding of the current reading assignment through the joint construction of text interpretations by group members. (Pressley et al., 1990, p. 85).

Here are the teaching behaviors associated with TSI:

- Strategy instruction is a long-term affair, with effective strategies instructors offering it in their classroom throughout the school year; the ideal is for high-quality process instruction to occur across school years.
- Teachers explain and model effective comprehension strategies. Typically, a few powerful strategies are emphasized. Teacher explanations and modeling include the following teacher behaviors:
  - Use of strategy terms, including defining such terms when necessary
  - Modeling of strategies by thinking aloud as he or she applies strategies during reading, including explaining the reasoning for applying particular strategies to particular parts of text—as well as how to apply the strategy to that part of text
  - Emphasizing that strategies are coordinated with one another before, during, and after reading a text, with different strategies appropriate at different points in a text
  - Telling students the purpose of the strategies lesson (e.g., to understand stories by using the imagery strategy along with other strategies)
  - Telling students how they benefit from strategies use (i.e., how strategies help their comprehension), emphasizing that strategies are a means for obtaining comprehension and learning goals
- The teachers coach students to use strategies, on an as-needed basis, providing hints to students about potential strategic choices they might make. There are many minilessons about when it is appropriate to use particular strategies. Coaching includes the following:
  - Encouraging students to use strategy terms
  - Prompting students to think aloud as they apply strategies to text
  - Cueing students to choose one of the strategies they know for application at a particular point in text, sometimes going so far as to suggest a particular strategy

  - Explicitly reminding students to use bulletin board displays and cue cardssummarizing strategies that can be applied during reading, with these prompts emphasizing that students should choose an appropriate strategy from ones they know
  - Prompting students to evaluate how well they read and to evaluate the impact of strategy use on their reading
- Teachers provide students with immediate feedback about their strategy application attempts. Such responses include the following teacher reactions:
  - Asking students to explain reasoning behind their use of a particular strategy
  - Restating students' strategic or interpretive responses
  - Praising students for using strategies
  - Pointing out when students are using strategies
  - Using teachable moments to discuss strategies—that is, using an occasion when a particular strategy might be profitably applied as an occasion for a minilesson on that strategy
  - Encouraging other students to make strategy use suggestions to a student experiencing difficulties processing a text strategically
- Throughout instruction, the usefulness of strategies is emphasized, with students reminded frequently about the comprehension gains that accompany strategy use. In addition to providing information about strategy benefits directly, sometimes teachers ask students whether use of a particular strategy helped them to understand or enjoy text—that is, prompting students to reflect on strategy benefits. Sometimes, they explain how the student's use of strategy is probably benefiting him or her.
- Information about when and where various strategies can be applied is commonly discussed. Teachers consistently model flexible application of strategies in situations where the strategies can be appropriately applied; students explain to one another how they adapt strategies for use with particular texts.
- The strategies are used as a vehicle for coordinating dialogue about text. Thus a great deal of discussion of text content occurs as teachers interact with students, reacting to students' use of strategies and prompting additional strategic processing (see especially Gaskins, Satlow, Hyson, Ostertag, & Six, 1993). In particular, when students relate text to their prior knowledge, construct summaries of text meaning, visualize relations covered in a text, and predict what might transpire in a story, they engage in personal interpretation of text, with these personal interpretations varying from child to child and from reading group to reading group (Brown & Coy-Ogan, 1993).

- A variety of conventional teaching behaviors are coordinated with the teaching of strategies, for example, use of "wait time" (i.e., waiting for students to respond to questions that are posed as part of strategically mediated discussions of text).[1]

If you are interested in learning more about TSI, read the books on the recommended list at the beginning of the chapter as well as articles by Anderson & Roit (1993), Deshler & Schumaker (1993), and Block (1993). If you have teachers who are interested in becoming TSI teachers, point them to articles by Brown & Coy-Ogan (1993), Duffy (1993), El-Dinary & Schuder (1993), and Schuder (1993).

Vocabulary Instruction

> The importance of vocabulary is daily demonstrated in schools and out. In the classroom, the achieving students possess the most adequate vocabularies. Because of the verbal nature of most classroom activities, knowledge of words and ability to use language are essential to success in these activities. After schooling has ended, adequacy of vocabulary is almost equally essential for achievement in vocations and in society.
>
> —Petty, Herold, and Stoll (1967, p. 7)

In spite of an almost universal recognition that knowing the meanings of lots of words is essential to gaining meaning and understanding during reading, teachers don't do very much teaching of vocabulary, and what little they do is poorly designed (Blachowicz, 1987). Having a literate vocabulary has even become cause for criticism, as I recently discovered. I was taken to task by a "reviewer" of one of my manuscripts; she didn't like the number of "big" words I used and specifically pointed out the ones she didn't know—all without a hint of embarrassment.

Measuring the extent of someone's vocabulary remains something of a mystery for researchers. First, there are different categories of vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary contains the words you can understand in speech or when presented to you in writing. Expressive or productive vocabulary contains the words you use with ease in speaking and writing. Determining the number of words someone knows depends on the definition of *know*. Does one "know" a word if one can correctly select a definition from a list of four alternatives? Or does one only "know" a word if it can be retrieved from memory when a definition is presented? Or should the learner be required to generate his or her own definition when presented with a word? A second major problem in determining how many words somebody knows is the limitations imposed by test construction. One can only ask a learner about a relatively small number of words in comparison to the finite number he actually knows. Which words are important enough, common enough, or familiar enough to be included on such a test?

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[1] Pressley et al. (1990, pp. 86-87); reprinted by permission of publisher © Brookline Books.

Dale & O'Rourke (1986) describe four "levels" of word knowledge: (a) I never saw it before; (b) I've heard of it, but I don't know what it means; (c) I recognize it in context—it has something to do with . . . ; and (d) I know it (p. 3).

How many words do your students know? There are a variety of "educated opinions" to answer that question.

- The average high school senior knows 45,000 words (Nagy & Anderson, 1984).
- The average high school senior knows 17,000 words (D'Anna, Zechmeister, & Hall, 1991).
- The average high school senior knows 5,000 words (Hirsh & Nation, 1992).

Regardless of how many words adolescents know, they obviously don't know enough "big words," or their test scores would be going up instead of down. There are three basic ways for students to learn new words: (a) by being read to, (b) by reading themselves, or (c) from direct instruction in word meanings. There is no doubt about the benefits of reading aloud to young children (and even older ones) with regard to their acquisition of vocabulary. The research regarding this assertion is compelling (Dickinson & Smith, 1994, Robbins & Ehri, 1994). Once students can read on their own, however, their vocabularies will expand exponentially if they continue to read more challenging and well-written materials independently (Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993). In fact, there is much evidence to support the notion that learning vocabulary incidentally through reading is absolutely essential. There are far too many words that must be learned to teach them directly in the classroom (Sternberg, 1987). We simply do not have the time.

There are many parents and teachers who suspect that the adolescents with whom they live and work know only about 15 words and use them interchangeably to say the same things. There is a factoid circulating in both the popular and academic press asserting that the working vocabulary of the average 14-year-old has declined from 25,000 words to 10,000 words in the past 50 years, although I suspect this bit of trivia may be an "urban myth" judging from the dead-end I encountered when trying to substantiate the validity of this assertion.[2]

One author claims that by the middle grades, if students are to make grade-level progress (i.e., learning 3,000 to 5,000 new words per year), they should be reading more than 1.1 million words a year of outside-school reading (25 to 35 books or the equivalent) and about 1.7 million words in school texts (Honig, 1996, p. 103). Are your students reading this much?

If students are to acquire the word meanings they need to read with understanding, they must not only read a lot, but they must learn how to become independent word learners much as they learn to become strategic readers. Carr and Wixon (1986) suggest that students must be taught how to (a) acquire word meanings (i.e., from context, structural analysis, and activating prior knowledge), (b) monitor their own understanding of new vocabulary (i.e., be ready to look up words they don't know), and (c) gain the capacity to change or modify strategies for understanding in the event of a comprehension failure.

We've known about the importance of vocabulary in reading achievement for a long time. In the 1925 National Society for Studies in Education Yearbook, one can read this statement: "Growth in reading power, means, therefore, continuous enriching and enlarging of the reading vocabulary and increasing clarity of discrimination in appreciation of word values (Whipple, 1925, p. 76). This statement is truer today than it was in 1925 as increasing numbers of limited-English-proficient students become members of our school community. Direct vocabulary instruction is critical for these students to achieve on grade level.

How Can We Engage More Students in Strategic Reading?

Without diminishing the importance of good early reading instruction or the difficulties children with disabilities face when reading, I would like to assert that many "poor readers" are actually lazy readers. This is not a reflection on their character. It's simply that no one ever told these children that reading was going to be work. Students turn on their stereos, kick back on their beds, and expect the book to transfer information from its pages to their brains.

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[2] I encountered the factoid in the February 14, 2000, issue of Time in the Numbers section (p. 25). It stated that in 1950, the average 14-year-old had a vocabulary of 25,000 words and in 1999, 10,000 words. The source was listed as *Conservation Biology/World Watch*. I tracked down *World Watch* for January/February 2000, p. 23 ("Matter of Scale," 2000), but it contained nothing more than a repetition of the factoid. My search then took me to *Conservation Biology* and an article by David Orr (August, 1999), titled "Verbicide." Orr's citation to the identical factoid was a book by Spretnak (1997), *The Resurgence of the Real*. Spretnak's book led me to a dead end. Her text contained the very same factoid I found in Time and cited *Harper's Index*, August, 1990, as the source. No such factoid appeared in *Harper's*.

—Jago (2000, p. 50)

We develop curricula, build schedules, and train teachers, meanwhile often forgetting that without the commitment of our students to the task, we are wasting our time and talents. The relationship of motivation to reading achievement is a relatively new topic of study, but for those who work with adolescents, it is highly relevant and very instructive (Borokowski et al., 1990). That trite aphorism about leading a horse to water was never truer than it is in middle and high school. Teachers can "teach" cognitive strategies, assign interesting reading materials, activate prior knowledge, preteach key vocabulary, and hand out organizational and concept guides, but how do they get the proverbial horse to drink? How can teachers generate enthusiasm and excitement for learning when so many students either believe they are not capable of doing it because of past failures (learned helplessness) or are not willing to put forth the effort that strategic reading takes. Not only must we intentionally and systematically provide strategic instruction, we must also find ways to "energize the self-regulating executive skills necessary for strategy selection, implementation, and monitoring" (Chan, 1994, p. 319) in adolescent readers. A tall order, to be sure.

The cognitive apprenticeship model is a powerful way to engage students and transmit cognitive strategies (Collins et al., 1991). In a traditional apprenticeship (e.g., one in trades such as plumbing or carpentry), the expert shows the apprentice how to do a task and then gradually gives over more and more of the responsibility for the task to the apprentice. In a cognitive apprenticeship, it is the teacher's thinking that is made visible to the students (e.g., Mike Simmons). The teacher situates what is being learned (i.e., the strategies) in the context of content instruction and then helps students see the worth of transferring what they have learned to new situations (p. 9). Strategic teachers are able to help students who believe they are not competent at performing a task become energized and motivated. Inspire, cajole, motivate, and expect all of your teachers to be more like Mike Simmons to "energize the self-regulating executive skills" of your students.

Exemplary Programs

For too long, we have been telling kids what to do . . . rather than showing them how.

—Harvey and Goudvis (2000, p. 31)

Resource C features three reading strategy programs. Two of the programs, The Benchmark School and Reading Across the Disciplines (RAD), integrate the teaching of cognitive strategies with content area instruction in schoolwide programs. The third program is for Title-I-eligible students and teaches strategies in a computer laboratory setting. Many districts have the resources and personnel to develop their own reading-to-learn programs, but these three programs offer tested organizational and instructional features.

Goals at a Glance for Chapter 4

Implementing a reading-to-learn program in your middle or high school will take planning, time, and ample resources. First, select the cognitive strategies your students need to be successful readers. Then, train your teachers to teach those strategies. Be sure to give them the time and technical support they need to achieve expertise. If you expect your program to be an overnight success, don't even begin. Last, integrate strategy instruction in the content areas year after year after year. Both the Benchmark School and RAD have taken the time needed to be successful.

Delivering TSI is like planting a crop. One must cultivate, fertilize, irrigate, and then repeat the cycle. The seed will not germinate in just a day or two. It will take a full growing season to harvest the first crop. There may even be temporary setbacks due to "climate" beyond your control. Producing strategic readers can take as many as three to four growing seasons, but the results, both in standardized achievement test results and the confidence and success of your students will be worth your investment. If you need to refresh your memory on the "big ideas" with regard to reading to learn, review Figure 4.3, the "Goals at a Glance" for Chapter 4.

FIGURE 4.3
Goals at a Glance: Reading to Learn

Reading to Learn

Select the essential cognitive strategies your students need to be successful strategic readers.

Train all of your teachers to teach those strategies.

Give teachers the time and support they need to become strategic teachers.

Integrate strategy instruction in the content areas year after year after year.

McEwan, E. K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: 5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals.* © 2001 by Corwin Press, Inc.

5

Motivate Every Student to Read a Lot: Reading in the "Zone"

RECOMMENDED READING

Quindlen, Anna. (1998). *How Reading Changed My Life*. New York: Ballantine. It is easy to forget that reading is about more than just passing the test when you're focused on raising achievement. Quindlen reminds us of the power of the printed page to change lives. See her list, in Chapter 6, of 10 books that will help a teenager feel more human.

Trelease, Jim. (1995). *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (4th ed.). New York: Penguin. If you have not met Jim Trelease, the pied piper of reading aloud, you've missed a wonderful opportunity. But it's not too late. If you have growing children or grandchildren, this book is a must-read. Even if you don't, Trelease will introduce you to the wonders of reading aloud at any age.

> According to a new study, fewer people are reading. Gallup, which has been querying people about their reading habits since 1949, sees a downward trend—the number of Americans who have not completed a book in the last year has doubled to 16% in 1990 from 8% in 1978.
>
> —Notes (2000)

Vinh came to the United States from Viet Nam in 1975. He was 9 years old and knew little English. His 4th-grade teacher didn't waste a day of instructional time and immediately began teaching Vinh the sound-spelling correspondences. Then, he was introduced to the school library, and a lifelong reader was born. The seemingly endless shelves of beautiful books on every imaginable subject fascinated him. He couldn't wait to read them all: Greek mythology, world history, botany, fairy tales, and fabulous stories like *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Lewis, 1994). No such place existed in Vinh's Vietnamese school. He started with the easy books that matched his reading level but quickly began devouring more difficult texts. He read about the Civil War, the Old West, and the New Deal. Soon, he knew more U.S. history than his teacher. He carried a well-thumbed pocket dictionary and looked up every word he didn't know. He lived in the library, checking out books by the dozens. His teacher wisely realized that to deny Vinh the daily library privileges he needed to satisfy his craving for books would be akin to denying food to the malnourished. Vinh was feeding his growing mind. For him, "reading [was] not just a matter of standing safely outside texts, where their power [could] not reach him. It [was] a matter of entering, of passing through the looking glass and seeing [himself] on the other side" (Scholes, 1989, p. 27). What Vinh saw in the looking glass of the hundreds of books he read was an educated and literate citizen of the United States, someone who could be and do anything he desired. Through the stories he read, Vinh

> learn[ed] to explore possibilities and consider options for [himself]. [He came to find himself], imagine others, value difference, and search for justice. [He] gain[ed] connectedness and [sought] vision. [He became one of the] literate thinkers we need to shape the decisions of tomorrow. (Langer, 1995, p. 1)

Vinh received his degree from the University of West Florida in 1991 and is now a successful business owner, husband, and father. He reads aloud to his young daughters every night, sharing stories like *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* with them. He is passionate about instilling a love for the stories and books that changed his life in his daughters (V. Rocker, personal communication, May/June, 2000)

Vinh is an example of what inevitably happens when a student gets hooked on reading in elementary school, reads voraciously, reads increasingly more challenging text, and uses cognitive strategies to gain meaning. The more you read, the more you know. The more you know, the smarter you get. For students like Vinh, the "Matthew effect" kicks in.[1] The Matthew effect gets its name from the New Testament parable in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer: "For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away from him" (Matthew 25:20, Revised Standard Version). The student who doesn't have or easily acquire vocabulary and background knowledge at the outset his schooling career often falls further and further behind as the words and concepts of grade-level texts become increasingly difficult to understand. The voracious reader, who reads increasingly more challenging books as his reading abilities improve, acquires new knowledge and vocabulary from every book that is read, thus making further reading an even more enjoyable and instructive exercise (Stanovich, 1986).

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[1] The term "Matthew effect" was first coined by Merton (1968) to describe a scientific phenomenon and was later adapted by Walberg and Tsai (1984) to the field of education.

The Value of Reading a Lot

> The great gift is the passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites. It gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is a moral illumination.
>
> —Hardwick (1990, p. 24)

There is an abundance of conventional wisdom and excellent correlational evidence regarding the benefits of reading a lot. Even though elementary educators have been arguing on and off since the turn of the century about which methodology (phonics vs. whole language) is best for teaching students to read, they have agreed that reading is learned through reading. The National Assessment of Educational Progress found that at the high school level, those who read well spend more time reading and read more pages, and those who read poorly, read the least (Donahue et al., 1999).

Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) found that the amount of time a child spends reading books is related to the child's reading level in 5th grade and growth in reading proficiency from the 2nd to 5th grade. They concluded,

> The case can be made that reading books is a cause, not merely a reflection, of reading proficiency. Although this case falls short of being conclusive, it is as strong as the case for any other practice in the field of reading, in or out of school. (p. 302)

Our deep and abiding belief in the benefits of reading has created a miniindustry around the concept of motivating students to read more books. Programs such as Scholastic's "Reading Counts" and Advantage Learning System's "Accelerated Reader" are based on the premise. Millions of pizzas have been donated in the cause of getting kids to read more. I've met principals who've shaved their heads, eaten fried worms, and kissed pigs —all for the cause of motivating their students to read more. I even had the temerity to jog around my school in a 1920s bathing suit to celebrate the number of books my students had read.

At the Amphi High School in Tucson, AZ, where scores on the Arizona Instrument for Measuring Standards (AIMS) test were disappointingly low, administrators revamped their daily schedule at mid-year to include a daily SSR (sustained silent reading) period for all students. They made their decision based on the belief that if every student read more every day, the school's scores on the AIMS test would go up (A. Julien, personal communication, April, 2000). So it comes as a bit of a surprise to those of us, myself included, who have been preaching that reading a lot will result in increased achievement, to find no solid empirical research to back up this assertion. Oh, there are some so-called experimental studies evaluating motivational programs like SSR and Accelerated Reader, but, unfortunately, researchers did not use control groups, were sloppy about collecting data, and used different achievement tests to determine differences between experimental and control groups (National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 3-22, 3-27). The sales brochures for Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts contain glowing reports, and it salves our conscience regarding low-achieving readers to believe that purchasing a "canned" program will solve reading problems. However, the National Reading Panel (2000) found that

> Despite widespread acceptance of the idea that schools can successfully encourage students to read more and that these increases in reading practice will be translated into better fluency and higher reading achievement, there is not adequate evidence to sustain this claim. (pp. 3-28)

Studies have not shown that motivating students to read more *doesn't* work; the practice just hasn't been shown to be effective in raising achievement on standardized tests by any high-quality experimental research studies.

What are principals to do with this information? Cancel SSR (sustained silent reading), DEAR (drop everything and read), and SQUIRT (super quiet reading time)? There is some evidence to suggest that simply turning kids loose to read anything they want to read, with no monitoring as to its reading level or without accountability for gaining meaning (i.e., through discussion or written assignments), is not a particularly valuable use of school time. SSR may provide a relaxing and enjoyable break in the school day, and it may even be beneficial for some groups of students. But for many students, this time could be used more effectively. The Panel did not suggest that we stop encouraging students to read. It did call, however, for more rigorous research to illuminate the question.

We have already discussed the critical importance of teaching decoding, developing fluency, and increasing the use of cognitive strategies to raise reading achievement. The research is solid in these three areas. Middle and high school students who do not have these prerequisite skills would be better served to spend their instructional time with skilled teachers acquiring skills and strategies and then practicing in reading materials geared to their specific reading levels far away from the prying eyes of their peers. Staring at just any printed page during SSR will not transform low-achievers into high-achieving readers. Very-low-achieving readers will only make gains in achievement if they spend their time with proven programs. Low-achieving students need focused, direct instruction along with reading a lot in leveled materials to improve their achievement.

Conversely, if good readers are not held accountable while reading challenging, well-written, and varied text during SSR, their reading may be just another example of activity without achievement.

The Importance of Reading Challenging, Well-Written, and Varied Text

> Reading books is good. Reading good books is better.
>
> —L. C. Powell (as quoted in Gilbar, 1990, p. 55)

Challenging Text

I received a question from a parent regarding a book her 8th-grade daughter was reading for Language Arts class. She wanted me to answer her question in my weekly newspaper column. Usually, parents complain about some aspect of content (e.g., profanity or sexually explicit material), but this parent questioned the difficulty of the book and the worth of spending nearly 2 months of class time doing dioramas, discussions, and dramatizations based on the book. The title in question was *Who Put That Hair in My Toothbrush?* (Spinelli, 1994). I obtained a copy of this young adult novel by Newbery-Award-winning author, Spinelli, (*Maniac Magee*, 1990) to check it out for myself. The plot is an appealing one to adolescents with its offbeat humor and theme of sibling rivalry. The only problem is the suitability of this book for in-depth study in an 8th-grade language arts class.

I applied the Dale-Chall readability formula to the text (Chall & Dale, 1995) and discovered that reading levels in the book ranged from a low of 1st grade (based on a passage containing 16 sentences and no unfamiliar words) to a high of 4th grade. The 8th grade students who spent over 6 weeks of instructional time "studying" this book didn't learn one new word they shouldn't have mastered by 4th grade or earlier nor were they exposed to any worthy themes or new information that might result in increased reading achievement in the future. The entertainment value probably even began to wear thin for most students after the first week. Merely reading is not enough. For able students, the text must be challenging.

Sandra Stotsky (1999) has written a thought-provoking and somewhat controversial book, *Losing Our Language*, in which she examines the erosion of academic expectations in reading over the past century. She points out that the incident of the 8th-grade class reading 4th-grade text is not a recent phenomenon but part of a steady decline over the course of the 20th century. She wonders "how much lower academic expectations can fall without significant breakdowns in thinking and communication at higher levels of education, in the workforce, and in public life" (p. 3).

Stotsky (1999) offers samples of reading texts from four different eras —the turn of the century, the 1950s, the 1970s, and late 1990s—for comparison. The decline of vocabulary and syntax is startling. She also points out a more recent trend. In an effort to serve up a smorgasbord of multicultural literature, publishers are spicing up English texts with dozens of foreign words. French, Japanese, Spanish, and even invented Native American phrases dot the pages of current reading books. This linguistic polyglot does little to increase the English language vocabulary of students in general, and totally befuddles ESL students who are trying to learn English. Do you know what your students are reading during reading class?

Well-Written Text

In the course of my career as a librarian-media specialist, I've fought for the right to have all kinds of books on the shelves. I don't believe in censorship, but lately, I've become more than a little distressed by some of the young adult fiction that's making the rounds. Students seem to be reading a lot of what Ann Tobias (as quoted in Duin, 1999), a book agent based in Arlington, VA, calls "the 4D books: death, divorce, drugs, or dismemberment." Educators lament the violence, hatred, and mayhem in our schools. We are quick to point fingers of blame at television, video games, films, and even parents as probable sources of the problem. I never hear anyone mention the books we're giving our students to read, however. Perhaps we should take a closer look at what's being recommended in our English and Language Arts classes. Consider the title *Making Up Megaboy* (Walter, 1998), about a 13-year-old boy who walks into an inner-city grocery and kills its elderly Korean owner. The cast of narrators (a newspaper reporter, a policeman, the social worker, a teacher, and his friends) can't figure out why he did it. The boy remains silent, just drawing sketches of his imaginary superhero, Megaboy. Or take a look at *I Was a Teen-age Fairy* (Block, 1998). It features the topic of pedophilia as the centerpiece for the story of a teenaged model who is lured into the world of drugs, sex, and alcohol.

Even the list of nominees for the prestigious Rebecca Caudill Award, selected by Illinois students in grades 4 through 8, is top-heavy with tough, gritty stories that depress even the most upbeat, optimistic adults, to say nothing of impressionable young people. Many of the nominees over the past 3 years portray a world that is evil, ugly, and cruel, like Katherine Paterson's (1996) *Jip: His Story* about which a *New York Times* Book Review stated: "Poverty, child abuse, slavery, racism, rape, insanity and death may not be what you expect to find in a novel for young readers." (Jewett, 1996).

Many recent young adult books are just plain confusing and ill-conceived, such as *View From Saturday* by E.L. Konigsburg (1996). One teacher who posted a review on amazon.com put it this way:

> This was by far the worst book I have ever had the misfortune of reading. The author owes me the money and time I spent on this worthless pursuit. . . . Once again, the Newbery Medal choice [this book received the medal in 1997] boggles the imagination. The Newbery has become a way to tell us teachers what books not to bring into the classroom. (amazon.com, 2000)

Where are the biographies of famous and not-so-famous men and women who have made the world better? Isn't anybody writing stories of discovery, invention, selflessness, and learning? Aren't there any positive family relationships left in the world? As a former librarian, I believe students should have lots of choices about what they read for recreational reading. I also believe, however, that teachers should use precious instructional time very wisely.

What would I recommend from the current crop of young adult novels? How about *My Life in Dog Years* by Gary Paulsen (1998), *A Long Way From Chicago* by Richard Peck (1998), or my favorite, *Rules of the Road* by Joan Bauer (2000). The latter actually has a heroine who is smart, moral, and funny. Don't waste students' valuable time on less than the very best.[2]

Unfortunately, many of our content area textbooks are as dangerous to a student's "reading quotient" as the fiction they and their teachers are choosing to read. Hayes, Wolfer, and Wolfe (1996) have hypothesized that the 50+ point decline in SAT verbal scores between 1963 and 1979 can be attributed to the decline in difficulty of textbooks during that period rather than any changes in the composition of the test takers. The documentation they provide relative to the decline of difficulty in text is substantive. They also present an illuminating discussion of the differences in students who took the test in 1941 versus 1991's students. The assertion that the composition of the test takers differed substantially in those 2 years sounds like a plausible explanation (we know that a far more heterogeneous group of students is now taking the test) until one discovers that a comparison of two sets of Caucasian students separated by 50 years (1941 and 1991) reveals a mean verbal score of 500 in 1941 and a mean of 454 in 1991. Interestingly enough, the math scores of the two groups were comparable in 1941 and 1991, suggesting that factors unique to verbal achievement contributed to the decline. Chall, Conard, and Harris (1977) attributed the depressed verbal scores to a post-World-War-II philosophy that encouraged textbook publishers to make books more accessible to students by watering down content, shortening sentences, and reducing the number of unfamiliar words.

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[2] Thanks to my friend, Kevin Killion, for his research and thinking on this topic. For further discussion on the Rebecca Caudill nominees, visit Kevin's Web site at http://www.mcs.net/~7Eshs/schools/caudill2000.html.

When textbook publishers simplified their books, they automatically reduced the depth and breadth of students' domain-specific knowledge. Domains are conceptual clusters (such as baseball, economics, or genetics) characterized by their unique combination of concepts, relationships, events, and domain-specific vocabularies. Textbooks have been criticized on and off for the past 20 years regarding their decreasing difficulty (Chall & Conard, 1991); poor writing (Britton, 1988; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988); mile-wide, inch-deep coverage (Chall, Conard, & Harris, 1977; Tyson-Bernstein & Woodward, 1989); and poor instructional design (Armbruster & Gudbrandsen, 1986; Educational Development Center, 1989).

Apparently, the publishers haven't been listening. A recent evaluation of high school biology textbooks by two independent teams of biology teachers, science curriculum specialists, and professors of science found that the textbooks (a) ignore or obscure important ideas by focusing on technical terms and trivial details; (b) are lavishly illustrated but are too abstract, complicated or inadequately explained; and (c) give little guidance for interpreting the results in terms of the scientific concepts to be learned (Henry, 2000, p. 8D). The evaluators recommended that educators use their old books rather than buy new ones.

Examine the textbooks used in your school. Do they make learning more difficult rather than facilitating it? Do they discourage rather than motivate students? Do they confuse rather than illuminate? Here are some common problems for which to look: textbooks that often infer and embed main ideas rather than stating them up front, textbooks with headings and subheadings that are vague or ambiguous, and chapter previews or summary statements that are poorly written or do not exist (Ciborowski, 1992, pp. 12-13).

Varied Text

Not only must students read ample amounts of challenging text, they must read both expository and narrative texts. The early childhood emphasis on picture books and fairy tales plus the literature-based instruction that has dominated the reading diets of most elementary students has not prepared most middle and high school students for reading expository text. They can deal with plots, settings, and characters. But they are baffled by comparison and contrast, cause and effect, or a sequence of historical events. With the advent of the Readers' Workshop (Atwell, 1998) and literature-based instruction, nonfiction has even fallen on hard times in middle and high schools.

ACT, the nation's largest provider of tests for college-bound students, periodically surveys middle, high school, and college teachers regarding the types of skills thought to be needed by students to succeed in college, as well as the type of reading that should consume the majority of students' reading time. Teachers across the levels were in agreement about the skills needed for success in college, with drawing conclusions and making inferences from the text rated as the top two skills. They differed, however, on the most important type of reading needed for college success.

Middle and high school teachers ranked prose fiction as the most important type of reading, ahead of text from the social sciences, humanities, and sciences. College teachers, on the other hand, ranked social science reading as being most important, with the humanities second, and prose fiction third (ACT, 2000, p. 10). "There should be greater use of multiple texts in reading instruction, and most especially, the texts studied should not only be narrative, but also expository" (Kibby, 1993, p. 38). Make sure that your Language Arts/English teachers have not totally forsaken expository text in favor of fiction, particularly young adult fiction (e.g., *Who Put That Hair in My Toothbrush?*) with watered down vocabulary and simple syntax.

The Necessity for Accountability

> *My daily contact with real live teenagers makes me absolutely certain that students need to be held accountable for their reading.*
>
> —C. Jago (2000, p. 63)

Without accountability, focus, and purpose, students will often "read" on automatic pilot. How do the best teachers hold students accountable for what they have read? There is no one right answer. Let's look at three high school English teachers, each with a different style, school, and set of students. They teach from coast to coast and in-between, but they each hold their students accountable for what they read.

Deep in the Heart of Texas

Carol Jago, an English teacher at Santa Monica High School, tells students what they will read: classics that she chooses and then holds them accountable on a daily basis for what they have read. She believes that "all books are not created equal."

She goes on to explain that

> Some [books] have the power to transport us to unexplored worlds and allow us—at least for as long as the book lasts—to become oth-

> er than who we are. Others only ever attempt to offer us chicken soup for our teenage or middle-aged souls. While there is no question that it is easier to persuade students to pick up the second kind of novel, a critical reading of classical literature results in a deep literacy that I believe is an essential skill for anyone who wants to attempt to make sense of the world. (p. 7)

Carol holds her students accountable for reading the classics she assigns and explains her method of making sure they're reading their assignments:

> I select a key sentence or two from toward the end of the chapter that has been assigned and ask students to write for five minutes, placing this sentence within the context of the story. Rather than putting students on the spot to remember details, I ask them to reflect on how the novel is developing. If I choose the sentence carefully, students can't do this without having read the chapter. These short responses are also easy to read and evaluate—no small thing when you meet 150 students a day. I don't assign grades to the responses but simply give students credit or no credit for having done their homework. (Jago, 2000, pp. 63-64)

Traditional book reports have fallen on hard times lately, replaced by dioramas, brochures, mobiles, slide shows, and collages. Students can get credit for a "book report" without reading the book. But some teachers, like Donna Garner, a recently retired English teacher from Midway High School in Hewitt, Texas, who is currently teaching at Central Texas Christian School, makes absolutely certain that her students have done more than hit the high points. Here are just a few of her book report requirements for freshman English:

> Since your ability to read is directly related to your success in school and in the workplace, I place a heavy emphasis on the importance of reading good literature. The best way for you to improve your reading level and your reading speed is to read. The books you read must appear on my reading list or be on my bookshelf. You will receive two points on your total 6-weeks' average for each book report which you successfully give. You will have two points subtracted from your total 6-weeks' average if you do not report on at least one book per 6 weeks.
>
> The book reports I require are painless. All you have to do is to convince me (in a one-to-one, oral discussion of the book) that you have read the entire book. You must bring your library book to class every single day so that you can read whenever you have any extra class time. I will remind you at the beginning of each 6 weeks about

> the deadline for making your book selection for that 6 weeks. When the deadline arrives, sign up for the book you have chosen to read. Once you have signed up to read your chosen book, you must bring that book with you every day; and you must give your book report on that book before you will be permitted to read another book in class. The purpose for this rule is to help you choose a book and then finish it.
>
> If you find a book (particularly nonfiction) which interests you and is not on my reading list, please bring it to me so that I can determine whether it is suitable for credit. If I approve it, you will need to write the name of the book and the author on your reading list and have me initial it. Do not bring a book into the classroom that has not been approved. I do not want you to be tempted to use class time reading a book which is not going to count for book report credit. You will notice that the reading level is given for many of the books on my reading list. If you know your reading level, you will be better able to select a book that is right for you. (D. Garner, personal communication, April, 2000)

Nancie Atwell's expectations for what students can read and how they will be held accountable are far more flexible and "progressive" than either Donna's or Carol's. Atwell teaches in the state of Maine and is generally acknowledged to be the originator of the Reader's Workshop on which her book, *In the Middle* (1998), is based. Here is a sampling of the guidelines she provides to her students:

- Find books, authors, subjects, and themes that matter to you, to your life, to who you are and who you want to become.
- Keep a list of your territories as a reader: authors, subjects, purposes, and genres.
- Try new authors, subjects, purposes, and genres; expand your reading schemas.
- Recognize that there are different modes of reading and different stances readers take in regard to different kinds of texts.
- Develop and articulate your criteria for selecting and abandoning books.
- Go inside your books and respond to the writing you are reading; decide what is working and what needs more work in the books you read.
- Write a letter at least once a week in your log about what you think and notice about the writing you are reading and in response to my and friends' letters to you; write to me at least once every 2

weeks and to friends whenever you wish to talk with them about your books.

- Read as much as you can, as joyfully as you can.
- Read for at least a half hour every night, 7 nights a week. (p. 113)

Where your teachers fall on the methodology continuum matters little. Their personalities, teaching styles, and student populations dictate what works best for them. What matters most is that they hold their students accountable for reading books with understanding, that their students have opportunities to interact regularly with their teachers regarding what they have read—either in writing or orally, that there is a balance between

Accountability Checks

There are dozens of other ways to encourage students' creativity, personal response, and interpretation while still ensuring accountability. Here are a few of the most effective ways:

Portfolios

A portfolio is

> a collection of student work, connected to what has been read and studied, that reveals student progress. It might include items such as: personal responses to reading assignments; self-assessments, teacher observations, attitude and interest surveys; writing samples (both complete and in progress); evidence that the student reads for enjoyment and information; and summaries. (Educational Research Service, 1998, p. 5)

It might also include a list of books read by the student; a summary of several books read during the school year; a listing of books read categorized by genre to illustrate the breadth of reading during a school year; a description of a favorite book, a list of books read at home or a list read at school; a brief description of the five books read most recently; or a list or descriptions of favorite authors.

Reading Journals

Reading journals contain daily written responses to what has been read during a silent reading period. Some teachers ask students to choose a quotation, copy it into the journal, and then explain its importance to the story. Others ask students to choose words they do not know and write their meanings. Another approach asks students a specific question to which they respond in their journals.

Book Reviews

Accountability could come in the form of a written review for an online bookseller. Acquaint your students with the review aspect of these Web sites and then offer them the option of writing an online review. Make sure that the written product is well edited before a student clicks the send command, however. Erasing the review is impossible once it's been published.

Essays

Essay assignments that only call for formal analysis of a text are far more common than essay assignments that call on the reader to include a personal response (Applebee 1993, p. 171). However, these two types of essay assignments are comparable in their effects on reading comprehension (Marshall, 1987). In Marshall's study, students reported that they sometimes perceived formal analytic writing as merely "an exercise in fulfilling their teacher's expectations rather than an occasion for thinking through the literature," whereas personal essays provided an opportunity to begin the process of independent analysis (Educational Research Service, 1998, p. 5).

Personal Anthologies

Students create personal anthologies by acting as editor: They search for works of literature that best connect with their interests and tastes, develop a theme, and then compile these works into an anthology (Sullivan, 1988). This process can motivate learners to read more widely and to make connections between the different works they read (Educational Research Service, 1998, p. 5).

Every-Pupil-Response Activities

After reading a portion of text, either in class or for a homework assignment, every student completes a brief written response to the text. They then participate in a discussion with a partner. The writing assignment might include a brief explanation of a specific situation, problem, or question as a way of assessing the students' understanding of the concepts about which they were reading. These are self-assessments, rarely collected and never graded. The goal is to reach consensus with their partner regarding the question that was posed by supporting their responses with text evidence and good reasoning, as well as by considering the evidence and rationale presented by their partner (Gaskins, Satlow, Hyson, Ostertag, & Six, 1994, pp. 559-560).

Teacher-Led Discussion Groups

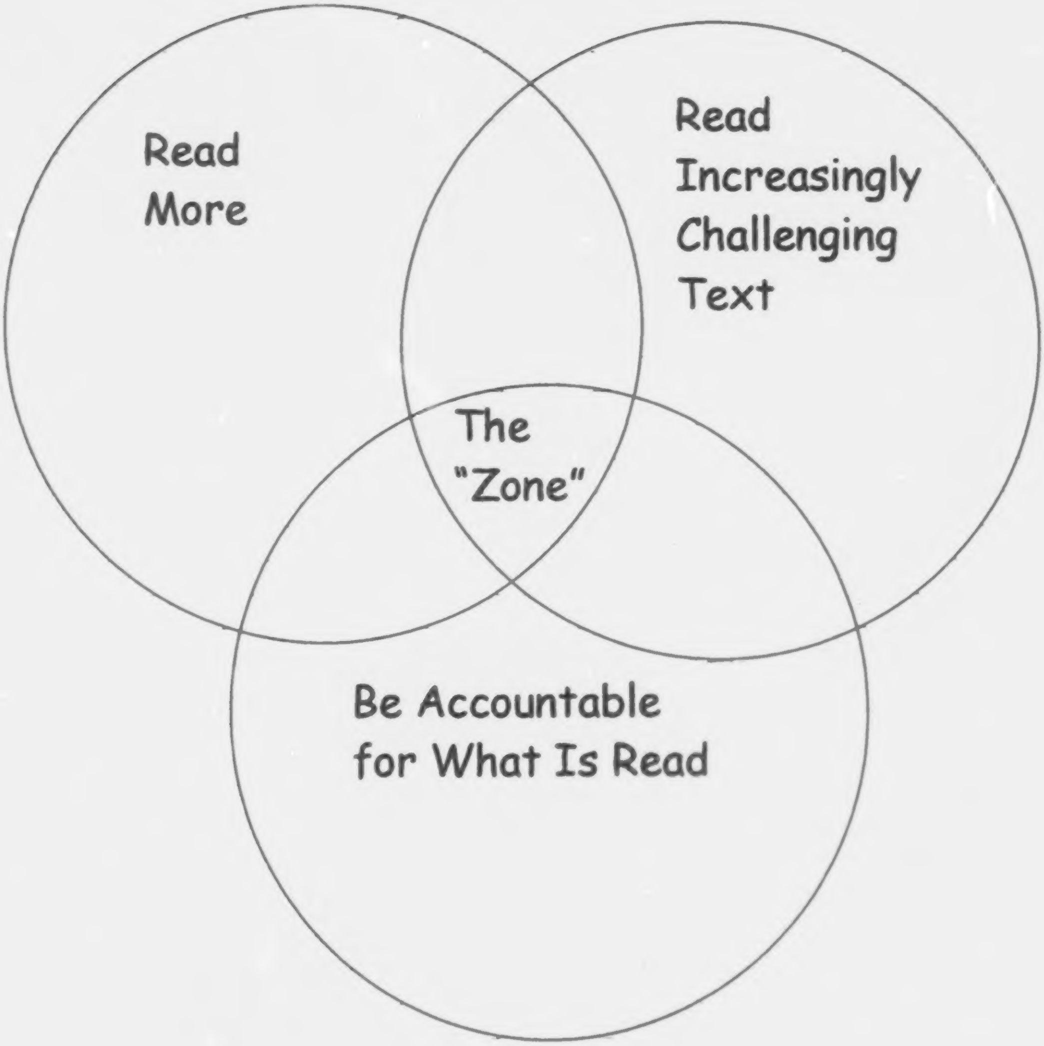
At the Blind Brook High School in Rye Brook, NY, students and teachers gather at the beginning of each school year to talk about the books (selected from a list developed by students, staff, and the librarian) they have read over the summer. The program is designed to encourage students to do more recreational reading, but there is a measure of accountability involved because each reader is responsible for bringing his or her opinions, ideas, and questions about what he or she has read to a roundtable discussion led by a faculty member who has also read the book (M. Arest, personal communication, June, 2000).

There are dozens of additional alternative evaluation methods that include (a) rewriting the end of a story, (b) writing newspaper articles about events in the text, (c) writing a modern-day version of a piece of historical fiction, (d) rewriting the text as a play or poem, (e) writing up an interview with a character in the book, or (f) writing a letter to a character in the book.

Reading in the "Zone"

When students are voraciously reading appropriately challenging text with accountability, they are in what I call the "zone." For the time that students spend reading to affect their achievement, it is essential that they be reading in the zone. Figure 5.1 is a Venn Diagram that illustrates exactly where the zone is located. It is the area where voracious reading, challenging text, and accountability overlap to produce fluency, meaning, knowledge, vocabulary, and enjoyment. Sometimes, teachers work too hard at taking the work out of schooling, denying students the satisfaction that comes from mastering a challenging assignment or understanding a piece of text that at first glance appeared too difficult. Each student's zone will be unique depending on his or her current reading level, but the experience of reading in the zone is nothing like a daydream or a minivacation. It's more akin to what Walt Whitman (as quoted in Gilbar, 1990) describes as

FIGURE 5.1
Goals at a Glance: The "Zone"


Read
More
Read
Increasingly
Challenging
Text
The
"Zone"
Be Accountable
for What Is Read

McEwan, E. K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: 5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals.*
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> an exercise [or] a gymnast's struggle; [something] that the reader is to do for himself, [he or she] must be on the alert [and] must himself or herself construct . . . the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay—the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start or [the] framework. (p. 39)

Careful, thoughtful strategic reading demands engagement. This kind of reading is nearly as exhausting as physical exercise. To suggest to students that mental effort is other than work is to mislead them.

Goals at a Glance for Chapter 5

As you have learned from this chapter, motivating students to read a lot at an appropriate level of difficulty with accountability is an important key to raising reading achievement. Merely spending time reading is not enough. Students need to read more of the right kinds of books (challenging, well-written, and varied), and they need to be held accountable for gaining meaning from what they read. Figure 5.2 presents the Goals at a Glance for Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, we'll continue our discussion regarding reading a lot and consider exactly what variables hold the potential to motivate students to read more, at an appropriate level of difficulty, and with accountability.

FIGURE 5.2

Goals at a Glance: Reading to Raise Achievement

Reading to Raise Achievement

Read a lot of books.

Read more challenging books.

Read well-written books.

Read varied books.

Read with accountability.

McEwan, E. K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: 5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals.*

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6

Motivate Every Student to Read a Lot: How to Do It

RECOMMENDED READING

Ten Books That Will Help a Teenager Feel More Human:

The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger
A Separate Peace by John Knowles
Lost in Place by Mark Salzman
What's Eating Gilbert Grape? by Peter Hedges
The World According to Garp by John Irving
Bloodbrothers by Richard Price
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers
The Member of the Wedding by Carson McCullers (Quindlen, 1998, p. 74)

Why do some kids love reading? What is rewarding and engaging about reading for these students? What do these engaged readers "do" as they read that makes the experience fun, satisfying, and engaging for them? Why do other kids hate reading? What in their experience has contributed to their negative view? I realized that year after year, I had encountered students who obviously resisted reading. But they seemed to be a minority, and eventually—I'm ashamed to say—I'd really just given up on them as far as becoming readers was concerned. It was when I encountered a whole class of them that I could not blame them instead of myself, the materials,

> or the method. Eighth grade remedial reading produced a crisis that required a new way of thinking about and teaching the act of reading.
>
> —Wilhelm (1997, p. 7)

For 5 years, the Battle of the Books program brought the 4th through 6th grades at Lincoln School into a reading zone (Cook & Page, 1994). The building virtually hummed with excitement over books. The program, which ran from October to March of the school year, involved the strategic reading of large quantities of challenging, well-written, and varied text, reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning, group and individual accountability, and healthy team competition for the students of Lincoln School. All of this was in addition to what they gained from their regular reading classes. Although the faculty did not conduct any formal research during the years we participated in the project, during 5 of the 8 years we focused on raising reading achievement, Battle of the Books was specifically responsible for the engagement and achievement of a sizable number of our most reluctant readers. Every student in the 4th through 6th grades participated in a cooperative team made up of five classmates with varying reading abilities. This was not a voluntary or negotiable activity. It was part of each student's reading grade. Each team was jointly responsible for reading a list of 40 books chosen by our town's youth services librarian. The books ranged in grade level from 3rd to 9th grade. Students reached consensus in their teams regarding what books would be read by each team member, with 8 being the minimum number of books to be read by each student. Some team members chose to read all 40 books, but each student was absolutely accountable for reading his or her assigned 8 books and knowing them inside out. Team competitions were organized at the building level to prepare for the library-sponsored competition, and students made up questions for other teams to answer. Teams met during lunch and after school to talk about the books they had read and to anticipate what types of questions the library staff would select to stump them during the semifinal and final rounds. Our librarian ordered multiple copies of all of the titles so that no one would have to wait to read a chosen book. Teachers read some of the more challenging titles aloud in class and discussed complex themes and difficult vocabulary. Some teachers personally read all of the titles themselves and discussed the books with their students, not only during reading class but also at odd moments on the playground, while waiting in line for music or art classes, or before being called to the gym for an assembly. Every spare moment was spent talking about books.

As the date for the library competition to select the team that would represent our school drew near, teams began to meet on their own initiative in the evenings and on weekends. During the initial year of competition, one of our 6th-grade teams took first place in the city. One of the team members had only attended our school since 4th grade and could scarcely read a word when she enrolled at Lincoln. She quickly caught on to reading under the tutelage of our special education teacher and bloomed into one of our most avid readers.

Although our school was the acknowledged underdog, we soundly defeated all of the other teams from the private and more privileged schools in our district. What was responsible for our stellar showing? Our students were engaged in reading for a purpose. They were focused on meaning as opposed to "putting in time." After our success in the first year, students read with even more intensity and direction. We managed to capture two more titles during a 5-year period.

Students who are personally motivated by their own needs and interests will invest time in reading (Guthrie et al., 1996). The *Harry Potter* phenomenon attests to this reality. A family member reported to me that her middle school son and his friends were reading the most recently released title, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (Rowling, 2000), by flashlight on a Boy Scout wilderness retreat, so eager were they to devour Volume 4 in the series. Missing from many motivational reading programs are these "personally significant reasons." Gray and Rogers(1956) put it this way nearly fifty years ago:

> Maturity in reading as one aspect of total development is distinguished by attainment of those interests, attitudes, and skills which enable young people (and adults) to participate eagerly, independently, and effectively in all the reading activities essential to a full, rich, and productive life. (p. 56)

For reading to result in increased achievement, students must be *personally motivated* to read and *engaged* in reading. They must be tuned in, on task, and strategically involved. Their heads must be in the text, not in the clouds. They must be reading in the zone, the intersection or overlapping of reading a lot, reading at an appropriate level of difficulty, and reading with accountability.

Engaging Students in Reading

Identifying and nurturing the context variables that genuinely motivate students to become engaged readers, rather than students who merely pretend to read, is a critical task for administrators. These variables include (a) the right kind of teachers, (b) the skills to read with confidence and success, (c) the right kind of books, (d) opportunities for directed and focused silent reading during the school day, (e) the promotion of books by every classroom teacher, and (f) superior library-media services.

The Right Kind of Teachers

> Now we come to the nub of the matter. Non-reading children are made by non-reading adults. Our resources may be poor, our stocks battered and too thin, we may be subject to all manner of difficulty, but one fact overrides all. The adult who reads for him or herself with conviction and who is knowledgeable about what is available for children is indispensable in literary education. Indeed, such a person is so important that his or her active presence can succeed in the face of enormous problems to a point far in excess of a school that has much better facilities but lacks a reading adult. The evidence for this is now legion.
>
> —Chambers (1985, p.12)

When my son Patrick, now an assistant professor of education, was in 2nd grade, he was fortunate enough to have a truly remarkable teacher. She motivated him to *really* read, not just the "pretend reading" that some of our students do as they stare at the pages and turn them periodically to mimic real reading or the memorization of predictable books—but real reading. Patrick's reading skills in September were on a 2nd-grade level—short books with a few simple words. Then, this amazing teacher made books come alive for him and convinced him of the value of reading a lot. By the end of 2nd grade, he was reading books with chapters, classics of children's literature by E. B. White (*Charlotte's Web,* 1952) and Laura Ingalls Wilder (*Little House on the Prairie,* 1973). Fired up by the combination of Mrs. Taylor's accountability system (students told her about the books they read and filled out forms with a one-sentence report), her warm, nurturing personality, and her love and vast knowledge of children's literature, Patrick blossomed into a lifelong reader. In fact, he read a grand total of 1,087 books in 2nd grade. Every teacher in your school should be a reading motivator like Mrs. Taylor, finding ways to encourage students to sample both narrative and expository text and to discover the joy of well-written books.

Students must first believe, however, that whatever their reading level, they are capable of becoming competent readers. If Mrs. Taylor had expected Patrick to read *Charlotte's Web* on the first day of 2nd grade, he could easily have become frustrated. He was a sensitive child and worried about pleasing the teacher. But Mrs. Taylor guaranteed his success by monitoring his reading ability and making sure the books he chose were within his reading reach. Along with the rich content and ample skills he acquired in 2nd grade, his teacher taught him to believe in himself—the most important lesson of all.

Markus and Nurius (1986) have labeled this phenomenon the theory of possible selves, in which students can see themselves in other roles—being successful and competent. A possible self can provide "direction and impetus for action, change, and development" (p. 960). The teacher must help students understand that "the people running the world today were once very similar to themselves . . . struggling to acquire basic literacy and mathematical skills" (Borokowski et al., 1990, p. 85). Mrs. Taylor was constantly standing beside Patrick, not only as a reading teacher but also as a cognitive coach—modeling strategies for him and cheering him on. In the beginning, he was hesitant. He needed constant assurance that he was doing OK. She was always there to help him take the next step. Whether the student is a 2nd grader or a sophomore, the principle is the same. Remember Robert from Chapter 1.

Gifted teachers encourage students to attribute their successes to hard work and their failures to lack of effort.

> This principle is as important for good students as it is for weak ones. The good student who attributes successes to high ability is constructing a personal story that provides no motivation for trying hard. The weaker student who believes that failures reflect low ability, which is unchangeable, has no reason to believe that effort will matter. (Pressley, 1998, p. 20)

Skills to Read With Confidence and Success

High self-direction and student expertise should not be viewed as an attribute of a child; rather, the process of self-direction depends on the "fit" between the demands of the situation and the ability and interests of the student.

—Meichenbaum and Biemiller (1998, p. 54)

Before I learned *how* to bowl, I hated to bowl. Who enjoys being humiliated in front of one's peers? Who volunteers to be the butt of jokes and teasing? I did not enjoy bowling, did not want to spend my time bowling, and most assuredly did not want to spend time with others who were good at it. Once I had excellent instruction, adequate practice to gain automaticity and fluidity in my stance and delivery of the ball, however, I achieved grade-level status in bowling (i.e., an average of 150). I've even had moments of giftedness (i.e., a high game of 222). Now, I love to go bowling. No wonder! My teacher believed in me. Success motivated and engaged me. When one reads comments like the following from interviews with school administrators, counselors, and teachers, one can easily see why their students aren't successful:

"By the time students get to high school, it is all over as to who will achieve."

"Once students get to high school, they are either intrinsically motivated or not, and this cannot change."

"Below-average and average students lack the discipline and motivation to succeed."

"Because of the way below-average students were brought up, they do not want to learn. They view school as something to get away from" (Oakes & Guiton, 1995, pp. 15-17).

What if my bowling instructor had predetermined failure for me based on my history? What if my teacher had decided that I wasn't intrinsically motivated and written me off as a loser?

Students must experience success if they are to progress in reading proficiency. Therefore, teachers must structure learning situations that ensure success. Success increases the willingness of students to work harder and to endure some frustration. Teachers can control a student's success in three ways: (a) selection and sequencing of instructional objectives, (b) grouping of students for instruction, and (c) instructional procedures and activities (Marliave & Filby, 1985, p. 230). The material selected for instructional use must be at an appropriate level of difficulty for the student. If a high school student has a 5th-grade reading level, asking that student to read material written at a high school level will result in frustration for both student and teacher. Placing students who are not reading on grade level into smaller ability-based groups increases the likelihood that they will experience success.

The Right Kind of Books

Ample Choices in Classrooms and the Library-Media Center Students need lots of books and materials from which to choose. For reluctant readers, the materials need to be accessible and inviting. Craig Spiers, principal at Joliet Central High School (IL), a Title I high school, purchased multiple copies of popular magazines and daily subscriptions to several newspapers for every study hall. Students are now reading who might otherwise have dozed or daydreamed. He also increased the book budget to buy more high-interest books for reluctant readers (C. Spiers, personal communication, April 5, 2000).

Students are often unaware of the vast variety of materials and services available in the library—pamphlets, booklets, historical documents, microfilm, microfiche, books, and magazines. They often read in a rut, failing to discover science fiction, fantasy, biography, history, science, art, psychology, or poetry. They need to be introduced and then expected to read from a variety of sources. Every classroom needs books, magazines, and newspapers. The school as a whole must be serviced by a well-stocked library-media center.

Materials at Appropriate Reading Levels My biggest challenge as a media specialist was helping reluctant readers find the right book. First of all, it had to be interesting and appealing to the reader. Then, it had to be on the right reading level—not too babyish or the student would be embarrassed and refuse to read the book but not too hard or the student couldn't read the book. Now, there's an answer to leveling books with almost pinpoint accuracy: the Lexile Framework (MetaMetrics, 1998). It is a tool that makes it possible to place readers and text on the same scale and eliminate the guesswork from helping readers choose books. The difference between a reader's Lexile (as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory) and the Lexile of the text can be used to forecast the degree of understanding a reader will experience with the text. The Lexile Framework was developed under the auspices of the National Institute of Health and Human Development and includes a software program called the Lexile Analyzer that measures the difficulty of text using vocabulary. When a reader has the same Lexile measure as a text, the reader should read that text with 75% comprehension. When the reader's measure exceeds the text Lexile, comprehension goes up to 90%, and the reader experiences total control and automaticity. The Lexile Framework has the potential for reducing the risk of frustrating readers and turning them off with text that is too difficult. "In reality, there are no poor readers—only mistargeted readers who are being challenged inappropriately" (Stenner, 1996).

Materials That Tap Students' Interests and Stimulate Their Curiosity

> "Why don't you go and do something?" my mother would say.
>
> "I am doing something. I'm reading."
>
> "It isn't healthy just lying there with your nose in a book," she would say, just as she said to my father.
>
> Thus harassed, I would find places to read where I couldn't be found—in the attic, in the woods, and at night under the bedclothes with a flashlight.
>
> —MacNeil (1990, p. 142)

Eager readers aren't picky and finicky about what they read. They leave the library with stacks of titles, knowing that they will reject some and love others. For them, finding a good book is as easy as picking up shells at the shore. Reluctant readers, on the other hand, hang back from the shelves, often never finding a good fit between their interests and the printed page. Linda Taylor, Robert's teacher, is a master at engaging these hard-to-reach readers. She explains how she entices her students, many with learning disabilities, into reading more.

> I find that the best way to engage students is to get to know them and determine their interests. Robert pointed this out to me not too long ago when he said that I was the only teacher who ever bothered to get to "know" him. Teachers have to "hook" students on a personal level in order for their opinions to even matter to the students. If one is "just a teacher," students will not be interested in working with you. Each student has needed a slightly different approach.
>
> Sonja (a pseudonym) is emotionally disturbed and was a very needy student when she came to me. As I guided the development of her reading skills, we kept trying to find something she wanted to read but weren't having success. I told her how much I loved Laura Ingalls Wilder and how many times I had read *The Little House* series. I knew that the Wilder books began at an easy reading level, increasing in difficulty as the series progressed. Sonja wanted so much to "be like Mrs. Taylor" that she latched right on to the idea. I sent her postcards from the settings of the Wilder books when we were on vacation. I taught her how to locate Laura Wilder topics on the Internet, and now she has become my Laura Wilder "expert." She tends the set of hardcover titles I bought for the classroom and carried each to the library to have the jackets covered with plastic. She counts them often to be sure that no one has "borrowed" one without checking it out.
>
> Robert desperately wanted reading skills and was willing to read anything in class to gain the skills. But he wasn't interested in reading outside of class—except in his research on Tu Pac. A turning point came recently when he was introduced to a group of teachers and administrators at a reading workshop where he told his story of learning to read. Afterwards, I took him to a used bookstore to browse and bought some books for him. I suspect that he read more in the van riding home than he had read in several weeks put together.
>
> Marina (a pseudonym) is a hearing-impaired student and loves horses. I found three horse stories by Marguerite Henry in a used bookstore. She wants to be a veterinarian, so I have also been picking up books by James Herriot. I spend a lot of money on books and magazines for the kids. Many of my students don't even own any of their own books. A 60-cent used book is a treasure to them.
>
> David is also hearing impaired and was a very poor reader when he first joined my class. I tried every motivational gimmick I could think of to get him interested in reading but to no avail. Then, I happened to overhear a conversation in which David was

> asking the counselor for advice on buying a camera. That very day, a new book arrived in the library on photography, and I urged the librarian to put it in his hands right away. Then, I got her to dig a bundle of old *Photography Today* magazines out of the stacks and give them to David. Shortly thereafter, I bought a subscription to a photography magazine for the classroom, and we were rolling. He read to find out the information he needed for his new hobby. By the time he graduated, he was reading nearly at grade level. I helped him to study for the ACT, and he ended up being accepted to a Big Ten university and receiving a state-level award from the Council for Exceptional Children. (L. Taylor, personal communication, April 2000)

Linda's methods will work with any reluctant reader. Building personal relationships is the first step.

Opportunities for Directed and Focused Silent Reading During the School Day

Individualized Reading Classes

> Pervasive reading—reading in every subject, in every physical space, reading just about anything, just about all the time—is the key to reading success. A book is a piece of technology best used by the individual, not by the group. Try to liberate readers from the group, and capture the intimate pleasures of reading, as often as possible.
>
> —P. Temes, Director of the Great Books Foundation,
> (personal communication, April, 2000)

Individualized reading classes have been around since the 1930s and enjoyed a brief resurgence in the 1970s (Blow, 1976). Perhaps, the time has come to reinvent the wheel or at least polish it up a bit in the new millennium. The individualized class offers at least four advantages: (a) the time students need to read without other content pressures, (b) opportunities to talk about books with peers and a teacher, (c) accountability for what is read, and (d) choice. Individualized reading classes in the past focused primarily on reading literature, and that is certainly one option. However, the individualized reading program could also be structured as an independent study for credit in which a student and teacher might develop a reading list based on a topic (e.g., genetics, the Civil War), a genre (e.g., science fiction), an author (e.g., Charles Dickens), or a specific individual (e.g., Charles Lindbergh or Hillary Clinton) and meet periodically to talk about what has been read.

The individualized reading class or independent study is not remedial in nature nor does it teach specific strategies. Its sole purpose is to give students opportunity (and credit) during the school day to read more widely than they would have time for otherwise. The following guidelines are taken from the individualized reading program at Cedar Falls High School (IA), directed by Barbara Blow (1976):

- Students can read any books they choose and nearly all class time is reserved for reading.
- When students register for the course, a note goes home to parents explaining that the choice of books is up to the student and his or her parents. The note invites parent participation and includes testimonials from parents of previous students who have enjoyed recommending books and talking with their children about them.
- When students finish reading each book, they have a 10- to 15-minute individual conference in which they discuss the book with the teacher. The teacher may make suggestions for other books that the student might enjoy.
- The teacher reads each book (or at least skims it) prior to the discussion. To enable teachers to build up a sufficiently large background of reading so that they can talk knowledgeably about the books, most programs have the same teacher handle several sections over an extended period of time. This contrasts with some unstructured (and usually unsuccessful) programs in which the course is seen more or less as a free reading study hall with little or no preparation required from the teacher.

Reader's Workshop

> When I finish a book, I have in some way finished a chapter in a relationship that I will continue to nurture. There are always two or three more books awaiting that I have already started, and another pile near my bed that have aroused my interest from their former place on a friend's bookshelf, the library, or a bookstore. I carry a book with me everywhere, just in case a train comes by or I'm stuck in a waiting room. I cannot imagine a day of my life without reading.
>
> —Wilhelm (1997, p. 5)

Nancie Atwell (1998) is generally acknowledged to be the founding mother of The Reading Workshop, an approach to literature-based instruction in which adolescent readers generally choose the books they will read. Here are some of the rules for the workshop as it is structured in Nancie's classes:

1. You must read a book. Magazines, newspapers, and comic books don't have the chunks of text you need to develop fluency, and they won't help you discover who you are as a reader of literature.
2. Don't read a book you don't like. Don't waste time with a book you don't love when there are so many great ones out there waiting for you,
3. If you don't like your book, find another one. Browse, ask me or a friend for a recommendation, or check the "Favorite Books" list or display.
4. It's all right to reread a book you love. This is what readers do.
5. It's okay to skim or skip parts if you get bored or stuck; readers do this, too.
6. Record every book you finish or abandon on the form in your reading folder. Collect data about yourself as a reader, look for patterns, and take satisfaction in your accomplishments over time.
7. Read as well and as much as you can. (pp. 116-117)

In-Class Reading Carol Jago (2000) has finally come to grips with the reality of the high school schedule and the lives of contemporary teenagers. She wishes she could assign 30 pages for homework and that everyone would read it without fail, but such is not the case. So she allocates 75 minutes of her 275 instructional-minute week to silent reading of the texts under consideration. This is how it works:

> For example, when I think that students will find a chapter particularly difficult to get through, I ask them to read a page silently and then we talk about what we have read together. After a few minutes of discussion, we read another two pages. We talk some more. With each break, I extend the length of the passage to be read. This is far from a foolproof system because the very slowest readers have trouble keeping up whatever pace I set, but if I'm sensitive about putting these individuals on the spot to respond to what they haven't yet read, students tell me that the exercise helps them keep going. (pp. 73-74)

The Promotion of Books by Every Teacher

Just as every teacher is a reading teacher, every teacher should also be a book specialist—not a book generalist, as is the school librarian, but a specialist. That is, science teachers should know the books in the school library that pertain to his or her discipline and be ready to recommend them or read them aloud to students as appropriate during the school year. They should also be recommending science titles to the librarian for possible purchase.

Book Talks

> The one book I remember most (junior high) is Irene Hunt's [1966] **Up a Road Slowly.** It was recommended to me by my English teacher and I remember that at the time she made me feel as though she had thought about it and decided this was the best book for me to read. It has remained special to me.
>
> —Carlsen and Sherrill (1988, p. 96)

Science teacher Patricia deCoster (1991) has developed a biology bibliography for her students containing books that correlate with units of study. The list includes a mix of fiction and nonfiction and contains authors like Richard Adams, Joy Adamson, Farley Mowitt, John Muir, and Marjorie Rawlings (pp. 33-35). An American history teacher might recommend Doris Kearns Goodwin's (1994) biography of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, *No Ordinary Time* or *D-Day* (Ambrose, 1994) to accompany a study of World War II.

The mathematics teacher might suggest *The Magic of Mathematics: Discovering the Spell of Mathematics* (Pappas, 1994), *200% of Nothing* (Dewdney, 1993), or *Innumeracy: Mathematical Illiteracy and its Consequences* (Paulos, 1988). A coach might give a brief book talk before a practice featuring David Halberstam's (2000) *Playing for Keeps: Michael Jordan and the World He Made* or *Basketball Fundamentals: A Complete Mental Training Guide* (Mikes & Meyer, 1991). There are books on every conceivable topic at every possible reading level. Teachers need to find them, read them, and promote them in brief commercials that entice students to read books they would not normally read.

The California Department of Education has produced three excellent subject matter bibliographies for teachers and librarians to use in the promotion and selection of fiction and nonfiction that is content specific:

- California Department of Education. (1993). *Literature for Science and Mathematics: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve.* Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.
- California Department of Education. (1993). *Literature for History-Social Science: Kindergarten through Grade Eight.* Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.
- California Department of Education. (1990). *Recommended Literature: Grades Nine through Twelve.* Sacramento: CA: California Department of Education.

These bibliographies are available from the Bureau of Publications, 916-445-1260.

Reading Aloud

The luxury of hearing a story freed my kids to step out of their own lives and know another young person's dreams and disappointments.

—Krogness (1995, p. 144)

Reading aloud is the time when "the teacher acts on behalf of the author, presenting the writing with as much enthusiasm and commitment as if it were his or her own" (Mooney, 1988, p. 24). Reading aloud is essential for those students who might otherwise be unable to access a particularly challenging text. However, all students can benefit from hearing well-written text read aloud. Having read aloud extensively as a librarian, I know the pitfalls of unpreparedness. Reading aloud takes just as much preparation as any other classroom activity. Allen (1995) has identified several areas to attend to in the process of choosing and carrying out a read-aloud: focus on defining a purpose, establish a positive reading environment, prepare yourself and your students for oral reading, know the text well enough to be able to choose places to begin and end as well as places to wonder at and question (p. 60).

Some students will need support from the teacher during read-alouds. Linda Crabb, a middle school speech therapist who also teaches remedial reading and language arts in the Montgomery Independent School District (TX), encourages students with auditory processing difficulties to softly read aloud out of their own copy of the book while she is reading aloud to the class. "Some students need to be hearing, seeing, and talking simultaneously for the story to make sense to them," she explains (L. Crabb, personal communication, June 15, 2000).

Superior Library/Media Services

When I . . . discovered libraries, it was like having Christmas every day.

—J. Fritz (as quoted in Gilbar, 1990, p. 154)

A gifted media specialist who knows students, teachers, and the content of middle and high schools is essential to engaging students in reading. Hire an individual whose first priority is service to students and teachers, whose second priority is putting materials and people together, and whose third priority is making sure that the library is humming every single minute of the day. Look for an individual who is warm, inviting, doesn't mind noise and messes, and can always be interrupted.

Goals at a Glance for Chapter 6

As you have learned from this chapter, motivating students to read in the zone takes a combination of the right kind of teachers, the skills and strategies to read with confidence, the right kinds of books, opportunities for directed and focused silent reading during the school day, the promotion of books and reading by every teacher, and superior library-media services. Figure 6.1 recaps these important variables in Goals at a Glance for Chapter 6, Motivating Students to Read in the "Zone." Reaching these goals will take the concerted effort of every member of your staff.

FIGURE 6.1

Goals at a Glance: Motivating Students to Read in the "Zone"

Motivating Students to Read in the "Zone"

The right kind of teachers

The skills and strategies to read with confidence and success

The right kind of books:
lots of books
at the right levels
to stir interest and stimulate curiosity

Opportunities for directed and focused silent reading during the school day

Promotion of books and reading by every teacher

Superior library services

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7

Create a Reading Culture in Your School

RECOMMENDED READING

McEwan, Elaine K. (1998). *Seven Steps to Effective Instructional Leadership.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. Find out how you can enhance your own instructional leadership by reading about how award-winning school leaders manage instruction, support faculty, motivate students, and support parents. The book contains a leadership checklist you can use to assess your own instructional leadership capabilities.

Schmoker, Mike. (2000). *Results.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This practical and fast-moving book will focus your attention on achievement rather than activity.

Create constancy of purpose.

—Deming (1986, p. 23)

Building a "reading" culture in middle and high schools is not an assignment for the faint of heart. Both students and teachers have myriad more pressing priorities. As the instructional leader, you must instill and nurture the beliefs and values that support a reading culture.

> Any successful organization, whether it is a community, religious, social, business, or educational group, has a set of core beliefs that holds its individual members together. That set of beliefs transcends any one person's self interest. In the long run, the core beliefs help

> the group accomplish its mission and fulfill the needs and aspirations of individuals. The transcendent beliefs of successful groups do not simply force individual members to comply with the group; rather, they are developed from the members' ability to accomplish together what they could not do alone. (Glickman, 1993, p. 15)

If the key players in your school community do not personally value reading or believe that teaching it is a part of their responsibility to students, raising achievement will be an uphill battle. Getting from where you are to where you want to be will require the following six elements: (a) strong instructional leadership; (b) shared decision making; (c) careful planning; (d) parental involvement; (e) increased accountability from administrators, students, teachers, and parents; and (f) adequate time to get the job done. Some members of your school community may have to change long-standing beliefs and behaviors about what is possible. Others may be asked to take on new assignments. Everyone—but especially students and teachers—will be asked to work harder and expand their repertoires.

The Force Is Within You

Force field analysis is a problem-solving process developed by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s. Participants identify a problem or define a goal and then describe the driving forces that will push toward a solution of the problem or completion of the goal and the restraining forces that will work against success. The process helps group members to verbalize both positive and negative feelings about a problem, a proposed solution, or a goal statement. Identification of positive forces enables group members to capitalize and strengthen these forces, and verbalization of the "negatives" illuminates erroneous information and issues that may be hindering the accomplishment of goals. Force field analysis always works best when it involves the group members who are most resistant to change and enlists them in solving the problem or reaching a goal (McEwan, 1997, pp. 100-102). First, complete the process by yourself, reflecting on your personal feelings about the goal and what you think could hinder or help you and your faculty to reach it. Make a copy of Table 7.1 on which to record your ideas.

At the top of the page, write the vision, mission, or specific goal to which your school aspires: (e.g., to become a school in which all students read with confidence and enthusiasm and in which all teachers model strategic reading and teaching). On the left-hand side, write all of the facilitating (positive or driving) forces that will contribute to what you and your staff want to accomplish. If a force appears to be complex, break it down into its separate components. Do not worry about which forces are most important. Then, develop a list of restraining (negative) forces that will get

TABLE 7.1
Force Field Analysis Worksheet

Facilitating Forces	Goal/Problem	Restraining Forces
→		←

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in the way of a solution or the achievement of a goal (include as many as you can think of). Answer the question, What forces will stand in the way of change? Again, do not prioritize the results of your brainstorming.

Once you have completed a personal force field analysis, engage your faculty in the same process. After everyone completes their own copies of Table 7.1, collate the results. Table 7.2 is an example of one faculty's completed force field analysis. It is a compilation of the facilitating and restraining forces identified by the entire group. When collating the results of the group, pay attention to the number of times a particular restraining force is mentioned. A problem that is singled out by only one staff member is never as crucial as one that is mentioned by the majority of the group.

When your faculty has identified all of the possible facilitating and restraining forces, next, cross off the restraining forces that are inalterable. Rank the remaining forces for their solvability, and then list some possible action steps that might reduce the effect of a specific force or eliminate it completely. This part of the process could take several meetings.

Force field analysis is a powerful tool to identify where change needs to occur to create a reading culture in your school. The status quo is only one powerful impediment to change; there are many others. Knowing what these forces are, as well as how ingrained they may be in your school's current culture, will help you to prioritize and then plan for change. Your most daunting assignment, however, will be changing negative beliefs or values regarding the importance of teaching reading and the ability of your teachers to make a difference. Values permeate an organization in subtle and often unseen ways. They drive behavior and govern decision making. What beliefs and behaviors would you like to see exhibited on a daily basis? You must begin to model them yourself in visible and authentic ways. Think about how critical values might look as they are acted on in classrooms, the library, faculty meetings, through grouping practices, curricula, traditions and ceremonies, student council, in how people are affirmed and rewarded for their accomplishments, and even in the hundreds of spontaneous personal contacts that take place daily in a school. Decide what you believe must be changed in your school if it is to become an organization that values, supports, and is successful with regard to reading.

Take a moment to write down your core beliefs regarding your students, staff, parents, and reading instruction. These beliefs are what will give direction to your efforts to create a reading culture in your school. They will help you decide how to spend money, allocate time, and evaluate teachers. Figure 7.1 contains a list of one principal's core values. Then, ask your faculty members or departments to jot down their individual beliefs about teaching and learning and use them as the basis for a discussion.

The time has come to examine the critical components of any improvement initiative: instructional leadership, shared decision making, parental involvement, accountability, and time.

TABLE 7.2
Sample Force Field Analysis

To become a school in which all students read with confidence and enthusiasm and all teachers model strategic reading and teaching.

Facilitating Forces	Goal/Problem	Restraining Forces
→		←
Dedicated, caring, hardworking, and knowledgeable faculty		Too many student below grade level when they enroll at our school
Well-organized staff development program		Lack of parental support
Core group of high-achieving students and parents		School not high priority for students—extracurricular activities and work interfere
People wanting to improve		Don't know anything about reading instruction—we're content teachers
Supportive administration		Students not reading enough
Resources available in form of grants and budget allocations		Students not liking to read
Good climate and culture in school		Low expectations regarding what we can realistically accomplish with low-achieving students
		Too much on our plates already
		Lack of time
		Scheduling problems

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FIGURE 7.1
Sample Set of Core Values

The teaching of reading is the responsibility of every teacher.

We *can* teach every student in our school how to read.

Every student can learn.

The learner should be treated with respect, even if that learner may be behaving inappropriately.

The teacher makes a difference in how, what, when, and why students learn.

Good teaching involves creating as many opportunities as possible for successful learning—instructional tenacity, if you will.

We must model and then teach strategic reading to our students.

We will support and encourage each other through mentoring, coaching, sharing, and cooperating.

Effective two-way communication is the responsibility of every student, teacher, parent, and administrator.

Important decisions must be made collegially.

Time to teach and learn must be protected.

We believe that if students work hard, they will achieve.

We have high expectations for every student.

We have high expectations for ourselves as teachers and administrators.

We believe that every teacher shares responsibility for the behavior and learning of every student in our school.

We respect, value, and welcome the ideas, input, and concerns of parents.

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Principals Do Make a Difference: Instructional Leadership

> A reading program that is imposed upon a faculty is not likely to succeed; it should grow out of a recognition that a need exists and deliberations of how the need may best be met.
>
> —Karlin (1967, p. 7)

What you do on a daily basis in your unique school setting makes a difference in how much and how well the students in your school learn. Your ability to successfully respond to the organizational and environmental context in which you work and to communicate a powerful vision for your school directly influences your teachers' expectations for their students and the students' opportunity to learn. This in turn creates a positive effect on student achievement in reading. When teachers perceive their principals as strong instructional leaders, students achieve more (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Heck, Larson, & Marcoulides, 1990; Heck, Marcoulides, & Lang, 1991; Sillins, 1994).

How can you determine if your teachers think you are a strong instructional leader? Ask them! If you want to raise reading achievement in your school, you must begin with a healthy dose of self-examination (McEwan, 1998, pp. 151-181) and a commitment to the following seven steps:

1. Establish clear instructional goals.
2. Be there for your staff.
3. Create a school culture and climate conducive to learning.
4. Communicate the vision and mission of your school.
5. Set high expectations for your staff.
6. Develop teacher leaders.
7. Maintain positive attitudes towards students, staff, and parents. (McEwan, 1998a, p. 13)

One powerful way in which your instructional leadership should assert itself is through your daily presence in the classrooms of your school. What percentage of your school's classrooms can you reasonably visit every school day? The answer to this question depends on the size of your school. Set a goal, however, and try to reach that goal every day. Develop a checklist of your faculty's names and systematically make your way through the list at least every 3rd to 5th day. If you are engaged in a schoolwide initiative to raise reading achievement, develop a checklist containing

FIGURE 7.2

Goals at a Glance: Seven Steps to Effective Instructional Leadership

Seven Steps to Effective Instructional Leadership

1. Establish clear instructional goals.

2. Be there for your staff.

3. Create a school culture and climate conducive to learning.

4. Communicate the vision and mission of your school.

5. Set high expectations for your staff.

6. Develop teacher leaders.

7. Maintain positive attitudes toward students, staff, and parents.

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the specific teacher and student behaviors that give evidence of outstanding reading instruction, along with behaviors from students that indicate attainment in reading. Use the following questions to help evaluate both your teachers and students (adapted from Davidson & Koppenhaver, 1988, pp. 184-190).

- What percentage of time do students spend reading independently in the classroom? What percentage of time do lower-achieving readers engage in oral reading to build fluency and automaticity?
- Do content area teachers integrate strategies for reading comprehension into their subject matter lessons?
- Do content area teachers build on background information and experience during prereading discussions?
- Do students have ample opportunities to respond in writing to what they read?
- Do teachers frequently model or think aloud for students as they describe how to use a reading strategy?
- Are students taught how to listen to others during discussions and to respond in meaningful and respectful ways to their teachers and peers?
- Do teachers facilitate rather than direct or control discussions?
- Do both low-achieving and high-achieving students have opportunities to read, write, and discuss?
- Does each classroom contain a wide variety of reading materials related to the content area (e.g., periodicals, fiction and nonfiction titles, and pamphlets or reprints of articles)?
- Do students experience a variety of grouping patterns (e.g., students who have read the same book; students who have read the same genre; students at varied ability levels)?

Following your classroom visits, jot notes of affirmation to teachers whom you have observed engaging in the behaviors on your checklist.

Figure 7.2, Goals at a Glance, lists the seven steps to effective instructional leadership. Make them your daily personal goals. When you're buried in administrivia, glance at these goals to remind you why you became an administrator in the first place.

You Can't Do It All on Your Own: Shared Decision Making

> A group of people is not a team. A team is a group of people with a high degree of interdependence geared toward the achievement of a goal or completion of a task. In other words, they agree on a goal and agree that the only way to achieve the goal is to work together.
>
> —Parker (1990, p.16)

Lest you feel totally burdened with the overwhelming responsibility of single-handedly raising reading achievement in your school, be assured that you don't have to do it alone. My training for the principalship included some passing references to participatory management and group decision making, but my job description led me to believe that I was personally responsible for doing it all. Fortunately, I was rescued from that mind-set when the concept of building leadership teams was introduced to our district. After the training period, our team met one full afternoon per month charting a course for school improvement and tackling the substantive issues related to teaching and learning. My staff members were definitely more committed to implementation when they were involved from the very beginning in making important decisions about how to reach our goals. Shared decision making has also been shown to increase job satisfaction (Ashton & Webb, 1986, pp. 95-97), create ownership leading to a more positive attitude toward the organization (Beers, 1984), and engender a more professional environment within the school (Apelman, 1986, pp. 115-129). After your team is formed, get training to help the group become cohesive and productive. You cannot expect a team to develop a collaborative working relationship instantaneously. If necessary, use a consultant or other resources to help your team develop the skills and trust it needs to be successful (McEwan, 1998a).

Now that you're on your way to becoming an outstanding instructional leader and have put together a team of knowledgeable and dedicated teachers who recognize a need for change, your next step is to develop a plan.

Look Before You Leap: Planning for Change

> Problems are our friends because only through immersing ourselves in problems can we come up with creative solutions. Problems are the route to deeper change and deeper satisfaction. In this sense, effective organizations embrace problems rather than avoid them.
>
> —Fullan and Miles (1992, p. 750)

Planning for change involves setting goals. Goals that are too numerous or too vague will frustrate teachers. A good goal statement must include the following five elements:

> - The baseline: where students are currently performing [e.g., 80% of our students are reading below grade level as measured by the Stanford 9 Achievement Test].
> - The goal: what you want to have happen [e.g., increase by 25% the number of students who are reading at or above grade level].
> - The outcome indicator: the measure that will be used to demonstrate success [e.g., the state assessment given annually in grades 9 and 11].
> - The standard or performance level: the level of success that shows substantial progress [e.g., grade-level reading achievement will be defined as a rating of proficient on the state assessment that is annually given in 7th grade].
> - The time frame: the time line for accomplishing the goals, indicating how much progress you hope to achieve after 1 year, 2 years, and 3 years [e.g., 10% increase in number of students in Year 1, 10% increase in Year 2, and 10% increase by Year 3]. (Policy Studies Associates, 1998, p. 54)

There are many excellent and inexpensive resources to guide your schoolwide improvement efforts (Educational Testing Service, 1996; RMC Research Corporation, 1995; WestEd, 1997). Which one you use is less important than that you choose a specific framework and stick to it.

The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators (1997; NCITE) has developed a handbook that will lead you and your team through four important stages: (a) setting improvement goals, (b) defining the scope of the improvement plan, (c) selecting tools and practices for the improvement plan, and (d) planning and implementation. Let's follow a reading improvement task force as they consider how to raise reading achievement in their high school using this model.

Step 1: Setting Improvement Goals in Reading Achievement

To set improvement goals in reading, the faculty at Somerset Middle/High School must determine what their students are not doing as compared to what they should be doing as measured by a test of their choosing. The first step has already been done for them. The scores for the "high stakes" exit exam have just been announced, and the news is not good. More than 60% of the sophomore class failed to achieve proficiency. Unless they pass the test on one of several retakes to be given, they will not graduate from Somerset with their class. Disappointment and frustration hang over the school like a black cloud. Sarah Cunningham, the principal, convened the

Reading Improvement Task Force for an emergency after-school meeting to talk about the results.

The teachers discovered after examining the data that many of the low-scoring students were chronic low-achievers, but there were also a disappointing number of average and even above-average students who failed to make the grade. This uncovered some serious problems that needed to be addressed immediately. Some members of the task force wanted to blame the scores on the fact that students didn't read enough, and they were eager to purchase a computer-based motivational reading program. They were convinced that the program had the potential to solve their problems with a minimum of regular classroom teacher intervention.

Sarah wisely cautioned the group to do a complete battery of assessments to determine the specific problems of both lower-achieving and gifted students before making any decisions. With the help of the special education and guidance staff, every student in the bottom 20% was tested using the Diagnostic Assessments of Reading (DAR) test (Roswell & Chall, 1992). The DAR is a criterion-referenced test that can be used to establish mastery levels (ranging from 1st- through 12th-grade levels) in six areas of reading and related language skills: (a) word recognition, (b) oral reading or connected text, (c) knowledge of word meanings, (d) silent reading comprehension, (e) spelling, and (f) word analysis (Curtis & Longo, 1999, p. 12). The task force was shocked to discover how many of their students did not have even the most rudimentary decoding skills. There were also a sizable number of students with serious comprehension difficulties.

The identified gifted students who failed the test received their lowest scores on the free-response section of the test. Their writing and reasoning skills were definitely not as advanced as their gifted status had led the teachers to believe. These students were given a standardized test of writing and reasoning in which they had to read and then write critically about what they had read. The results, evaluated by the advanced placement English teacher, uncovered several problems: weak vocabulary and background knowledge and inability to synthesize and evaluate ideas from reading to produce a written product. The task force formulated a two-part goal: (a) raising the overall reading achievement of a specific group of targeted students who were achieving well below grade level in two specific areas of reading: decoding and comprehension and (b) increasing the ability of gifted students to use cognitive strategies in reading and writing. The meeting was adjourned, and the group agreed that during the next meeting, they would get down to spelling out the details of their improvement plan.

Step 2: Defining the Scope of the Improvement Plan

At the next meeting, one of the teachers spoke up to say that she didn't think it was fair to develop a plan that left out the "kids in the middle."

She felt that many of them could benefit from either the decoding/comprehension strand being considered for lower-achieving readers or the cognitive strategy/writing strand being considered for higher-achieving students. "If we neglect these kids, we're doing them and ourselves a real disservice," she said. "Why not raise every student's achievement?" Another team member felt that this was an impossible task and would ask too much of teachers. "We can handle the top and the bottom," he explained. "By adding a few remedial classes and some gifted activities, our plan will be manageable." The other task force members were enthusiastic, however, and felt they could gain the support of the entire faculty for a goal that would work on every student's achievement. The task force realized that they needed to consult with faculty about this question before they could determine the scope of the improvement plan. Someone volunteered to survey the teachers before the next meeting to determine what, if anything, they were already doing in their classrooms to teach cognitive strategies. A second member of the task force suggested forming a subcommittee to determine how frequently low reading levels affected homework assignments and whether textbooks were actually suitable for students' reading levels. Several others agreed to investigate the issue of "academic press" for gifted students, feeling their strategic reading abilities my have been taken for granted.

Step 3: Selecting Tools and Practices for the Improvement Plan

Meanwhile, the group of teachers eager to purchase the motivational program continued to lobby for an immediate decision. The program was highly recommended by a librarian from a neighboring school district who had been using it for 1 year and pointed to increased circulation and student motivation to read. Sarah requested a packet of research from the company. Unfortunately, the research was disappointing, both in quantity and quality. "Research should be of high quality and ample enough to justify widespread adoption of an approach and the accompanying expenditure of funds and effort" (NCITE, 1997). Because Somerset was considering implementing this innovative curriculum throughout all of the grades and classrooms of the school, involving over 2000 students, Sarah carefully considered the following NCITE recommendations.

> If a large-scale improvement is required, then the school must select approaches that (a) have proven successful in other wide-scale improvement efforts, or (b) have proven successful in a medium-scale implementation and include a plan for expansion that indicates there is a strong likelihood that the approach will be uniformly successful in a large-scale effort.

The task force wisely decided that a large-scale implementation using a program for which they did not have an adequate research base would be inadvisable, although they did not totally dismiss the idea of using the recommended materials for a small-scale trial in several classrooms if it included a well-structured assessment component. Of special concern to the teachers were the diverse learners at each grade level (e.g., special education, at risk, and limited English proficient). Because these students were not achieving at the desired levels overall, special attention would need to be paid to their needs. Students with potentially higher failure rates must be carefully monitored during any kind of experimentation. Sarah agreed to contact the local university and ask them for assistance in designing a research study containing experimental and control groups to evaluate the feasibility of doing the program with the entire school.

Step 4: Planning and Implementation

The subcommittee that had been asked to investigate possible curricula for the lowest-achieving reading students presented the research they had found on Corrective Reading and its success with diverse learners. The results were impressive, and the committee noted that the experimental groups in the studies had similar demographics to the students of their school (NCITE, 2000). They explained the program to the staff and enlisted volunteers to be trained.

The parents of the students who were selected to participate in the research study evaluating the motivational reading program were notified in the early spring prior to the implementation year. A meeting was held to answer questions regarding the implementation, and parents who objected to the implementation had the option of refusing to participate.

Not only were plans laid for an in-house summative, standardized assessment to be given during late spring of the implementation year, but several formative assessments were planned at critical points throughout the school year. The district's assessment specialist helped the team design a plan to measure students' gain scores in reading during the implementation year to be compared to their gain scores during earlier years. In this way, the team could consider each individual child's progress as well as the group's average achievement. The gain score method would be especially helpful for evaluating the impact of the pilot implementation on diverse learners.

After examining the textbooks currently in use, the teachers found that most were well written and accessible to students but determined that teachers lacked confidence in their own abilities to develop cognitive strategy instruction based on their specific content area. The task force recommended staff development in this area and asked the district reading coordinator to work with the team to identify a common core of strategies that would be taught first to teachers and later to students throughout the school year.

After 1 year of implementation, the reading task force met to review the test results. The in-house test scores were higher than they had ever been, and a sizable portion of the students who had failed the initial "high stakes" exam passed it during a second testing period. The gifted students continued to post only moderate gains in comparison to their lower-achieving peers, however. The faculty felt they had personally made progress in developing strategic teaching skills but still had a long way to go. The staff development took much longer to organize and implement than anticipated, and some teachers were still not comfortable with their new roles. They cautioned the task force against making any hasty decisions until the teachers were more comfortable and skilled at teaching cognitive strategies. The task force also discussed the possibility of diverse teacher expectations as a variable that might have adversely affected the gain scores. They examined the gain scores of students at different grade levels and with different teachers to see if they could detect any subtle patterns that might reveal such trends. Under discussion was the issue of implementing more advanced classes rather than placing all students in heterogeneous classes.

As you work with your reading task force or school improvement team to plan for change, consider the process from several perspectives:

First, provide plenty of research and resource materials, speakers, and site visits so that team members can make decisions from a sound knowledge base. Don't reinvent the wheel, but don't rush out to duplicate what someone else has done, either. Consider your student body, faculty, and parent community before you make change. For example, if you decide that new textbooks or a new program need to be chosen, leave no stone unturned in gathering resource materials and research studies. Do not rush to judgment.

Second, encourage every faculty member to be brutally honest about which of the alterable variables they believe are creating the most serious roadblocks to achievement (e.g., low expectations, lack of a common set of values with regard for grades and homework, or inconsistent instruction across a grade level). Structure a group process in which every member of the group is expected to contribute ideas. If teachers are reluctant to speak in front of others, use a questionnaire or small focus groups to gather information that can then be shared in the large group by a spokesperson. "It is no simple matter to reform teaching, learning, and the supporting conditions that fuel and refuel the moral purpose of teaching" (Fullan, 1994, p. 79).

Last, make sure that time is given for all points of view to be heard and understood. Shutting down discussion and dissent will result in a fragmented implementation.

Get Mom and Dad on Your Side: The Importance of Parental Involvement

> When a process makes people feel that they have a voice in matters that affect them, they will have a greater commitment to the overall enterprise and will take greater responsibility for what happens to the enterprise. The absence of such a process insures that no one feels responsible, that blame will always be directed externally, that adversarialism will be a notable feature of school life.
>
> —Sarason (1990, p. 61)

Parental involvement and support are crucial to raising reading achievement in your school. One way in which we garnered parental support and involvement was through publishing what we called our "I Can Learn" booklet. This booklet set forth the outcomes in reading, writing, and mathematics for all grade levels so parents knew what we expected their children to learn. We also included a set of teacher expectations (e.g., the teacher is expected to provide quality instruction for all students, hold students accountable for following school rules and completing assignments, and evaluating and communicating student progress to parents and students) as well as expectations for parents and students. This document sent the message to parents that we were serious about learning and that we must all be accountable (teachers, parents, and students) if we were to reach our goals.

I believe that when parents observe the following evidence in your school, they will back you 100%:

- Evidence of students (both their own and others) learning that is validated through both formative testing made available to individual parents and published summative evaluations made available to the community
- Evidence of teaching effectiveness as observed by parents when they are participating in the life of the school as volunteers or visitors (e.g., frequent planned events that bring parents into classrooms to observe)
- Evidence of educators' desires to make parents a part of the "learning team" through advisory groups, inclusion on the building leadership team, and through periodic surveys that ask for parental input

There are five important things that parents can do to assist in your achievement initiative:

- Read at home and talk with their children about what they are reading at school; have a wide variety of books, newspapers, and magazines in the home
- Visit their children's teachers to find out how their children are learning and how they can help; this requires that teachers have an open-door policy and are able to explain what they are doing in lay language—educational jargon is not an acceptable means of communication
- Insist that their children learn how to read and read regularly with and to them at home
- Help their children understand the importance of planning for college by visiting campuses, familiarizing them with college requirements, and exploring financial aid options available to students
- Show the importance of reading for every career choice by talking with their children about the use of reading in their work or the work of adults they know

When parents are unable for whatever the reasons to do some or all of these things, offer assistance through the guidance or counseling offices. Raising expectations for students and giving them opportunities to expand their horizons is a critical responsibility of every teacher, in cooperation with the guidance counselors.

What Gets Measured Gets Done: Assessment and Accountability

> *We strongly recommend that school districts [and schools] clearly define their understanding of the desired end result early in the change process.*
>
> —Harrison, Killion, and Mitchell (1989, p. 56)

If you want to lead your school toward excellence in reading achievement, you must become an evaluation-minded principal (Nevo, 1991). You must constantly evaluate the teaching effectiveness of your staff, the reading proficiency of your students, and the overall effectiveness of your programs. Evaluation in each of these areas must be both summative and formative (Scriven, 1967).

> Summative evaluation offers a final determination of the worth of a program or individual's performance in a role. It is not designed

> to be constructive; rather it is designed to be ultimately judgmental and primarily used by those stakeholders who will make some decision about a program or individual continuation. Formative evaluation, on the other hand, is conceptualized as constructive. In both roles, evaluation serves to inform decision making. (Goldring & Rallis, 1993, pp. 96-97)

How will you and your team determine your student body's level of literacy? That decision should be made before you launch into your reading improvement plan. If you're going to use a different measure of student achievement than you have presently been using, administer a pretest to all of the students to gather baseline data. If testing is to be meaningful and helpful to classroom teachers, it must track the performance and progress of each individual student in your school over a several-year period. The tests should be standardized and administered yearly to every student. I am aware of the popularity of performance assessments and believe they are an ideal way for teachers to assess students in the classroom, but my experiences in constructing and administering performance tests at the district level has led me to agree wholeheartedly with these authors:

> On the basis of the data examined, we are forced to conclude that constructed response items provide less information in more time at greater cost than do multiple choice items. This conclusion is surely discouraging to those who feel that constructed response items are more authentic and hence, in some sense, more useful than multiple-choice items. It should be. (Lukhele, Thissen, & Wainer, 1994, p. 245)

I am also aware of the controversy over testing limited-English-proficient and learning-disabled students. Many states are excluding larger numbers of students each year, and not surprisingly, achievement scores rise. This is not the kind of improvement you should be looking for. Although my state and district offered testing exemptions to these populations, as a principal, I wanted to know how effective our efforts were at helping diverse learners join the mainstream. To know that an individual student has made substantial gains in achievement (even if he or she is still below grade level) is far more instructive than knowing the composite reading score of a particular grade level or of the school as a whole. We examined the longitudinal test data of each of our students to determine their progress over time. We tracked the type of teachers with whom they experienced the most success. We expected our target students (those who were well below grade level) to overcome huge deficits in performance through our interventions, and seeing those results in black and white was highly motivating to teachers. Gains in reading achievement are made one student at a time. We also disaggregated our data to determine how well we were serving the students in various subpopulations. Overall improvement in reading achievement that is based only on the achievement of students in the top quartile means that you are achieving quality without equity, a condition that discriminates against students in the bottom quartile.

At the same time that you are planning how to summatively evaluate the results of your implementation, don't overlook the importance of formative evaluation, the ongoing monitoring of a program that will help you determine if any students or teachers are "falling through the cracks." The purpose of formative testing is to provide information to the learner and to the teacher about what the learner knows.

Do not hesitate to ask for help with assessment and accountability. Possible sources for technical assistance include: (a) a test company consultant who will work with your staff to understand the construction of standardized tests and how they can be used to evaluate your program, (b) a university professor who can be hired to provide the evaluation component of your plan, (c) central office staff who have expertise in this area, or (d) a state department of education consultant.

Assessment is essential to improvement. Without continuous monitoring of progress, you will be unable to answer questions about specific individuals or groups of students.

> It is the action around assessment—the discussions, meetings, revisions, arguments, and opportunities to continually create new directions for teaching, learning, curriculum, and assessment—that ultimately have consequence. The "things" of assessment are essentially useful as dynamic supports for reflection and action, rather than as static products with value in and of themselves. (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995, p. 18)

Take Your Time: The Five-Year Plan

> *O Lord God, when Thou givest to thy servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same until it is thoroughly finished which yieldeth the true glory.*
>
> *—F. Drake (as quoted in Fitton, 1997, p. 201)*

Implementing an improvement initiative takes time, and if you fast-forward through any of the critical stages, you will fail. As important as vision is, beware of becoming blinded by your own.

> The principal who is committed to a particular innovation or philosophy may pursue it in such narrow and self-defeating ways that key teachers will resist the idea until the principal leaves or is transferred. In other cases the principal is "apparently successful" in getting teachers to use the innovation while failing to achieve more basic changes in enabling them to consider alternatives, reflect on their practices, and otherwise improve. Fullan (1992, p. 19)

Take the time needed for goal setting, planning, training, implementation, fine-tuning, and evaluation. Consider alternatives, and listen to teachers who may have questions or concerns. Teachers typically go through a variety of stages on their way to successfully implementing a new program; don't push them faster than they can go. Begin small if you need to.

> The objective of evolutionary planning is to capitalize on the "low risk" quality of smaller-scale innovation to increase certainty. This, in turn, increases motivation, and the possibility of concerted, more "tightly coupled" action across the school. (Louis & Miles, 1990, p. 211)

Be sensitive to how much change your teachers can handle at one time and be prepared to celebrate small successes and gradual improvements.

Goals at a Glance for Chapter 7

Raising reading achievement in your school will require the concerted effort of many individuals—administrators, teachers, parents, and most especially students. Do not forget that it is the students who actually sharpen their No. 2 pencils and sit down to take the tests that will measure your success as a school. Good breakfasts and pep assemblies with cheerleaders can never take the place of solid instruction and hard work every single day of the school year, year after year after year. Achievement, not activity, is your goal. Dogged determination is preferred to bursts of brilliance. Raising reading achievement is often messy; improvement is never neat and circumscribed. There will be arguments, discussions, conflict, and territorialism. You must be the facilitator. There will be uncertainties and questions. You must grow accustomed to ambiguity and learn to live with approximation. There will be weariness and discouragement. You must help staff members appreciate small steps forward even though you are looking for more dramatic improvements. Be prepared for teachers and parents who want to move too quickly and for a like number of folks who do not want to move at all. You are the maestro. You alone have the power to create a symphony from cacophony. After your review of Figure 7.3—Goals at a Glance: Creating a Reading Culture in Your School—you will be ready to accept the challenge. Pick up the baton and begin.

One Final Assignment

Before you close the book, take a brief moment to read an inspiring story in the Conclusion and then take a quick look at Resource D, where all of the Goals-at-a-Glance visuals have been collected in one easy-to-find location. If you are the kind of reader who inevitably begins at the back of a book, you will get a graphic overview of the book's contents. More conventional readers can use these Goals-at-a-Glance exhibits, forms, and figures to focus their efforts, work with their reading improvement teams, or introduce their teachers to the importance of raising reading achievement. If you would like more information about a workshop based on this book or have questions about something you have read, please see my web site (www.elainemcewan.com) where I can be contacted.

FIGURE 7.3

Goals at a Glance: Create a Reading Culture in Your School

Create a Reading Culture in Your School

Follow the seven steps to effective instructional leadership.

Share decision making with your school community.

Plan carefully for change.

Get mom and dad on your side.

Be results oriented and accountable.

Take the time you need to get the job done.

McEwan, E. K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High School: 5 Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Principals.*
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Conclusion

When you stop to evaluate the demands on your time and energy as a principal, it would be easy to become demoralized. There are dozens of things on your "to do" list, hundreds of distractions, and never enough time. Raising reading achievement can easily become just one more thing to worry about. Or it can become a priority and a passion. Why should raising reading achievement move to the top of your to-do list? Every student who leaves your school without knowing how to read faces an uncertain future. In a best-case scenario, your low-achieving students might end up like George Dawson, the senior citizen we met in Chapter 1. George lived a full and satisfying life, didn't feel the need to learn to read until the age of 98, and then wrote a book and became famous. The odds are more likely, however, that your low-achieving or nonreaders will end up like Charles (a pseudonym). Charles just turned 20 and spent his birthday in prison, serving a term for robbery. He was in trouble from the 1st grade until he dropped out at 16, reading at a low 4th-grade level and still unable to form letters with a pencil, much less construct a coherent sentence.

Like Robert, the student we met in Chapter 1, Charles was blessed to meet Linda. In addition to her full-time teaching responsibilities, she tutors weekly at the jail. She taught Charles for several months using the same method she uses at school, described in *The Writing Road to Reading* (Spalding & Spalding, 1957/1990). When she tested him during his first tutoring session, he was reading between a 4th- and 5th-grade level. He showed an immediate interest, paid close attention to the instruction in phonograms, and took a set of flash cards back to his cell. He saw the relationship between the code and the phonograms and made a point to memorize them quickly. He immediately began to put them into use and requested that he be moved to a harder book. When Linda tested him before he was transferred to a larger prison, after less than 2 months of tutoring, he scored at an 8.8 grade level. She lost track of him until she received the poignant letter shown in Figure C.1.

The spelling, punctuation, and grammar are exactly as Charles wrote them. No corrections were made. Linda hastens to point out, however, that Charles couldn't even produce a legible handwritten sentence before she began teaching him. The original letter (written in careful primary manu-

FIGURE C.1

Letter From Charles to Linda

Linda,

Hello. It's just me, Charles. well I'm here at the county jail doing the hardest time ever. I miss concord jail because It's not as big as this one and the guards are nicer and so are the inmates. well I have been staying to myself but I am in a six man cell with seven other people. Already I have been In two fights and lost both. I didn't even do anything. people fight around here just to pass time so I stay away from everybody.

I do have good news my case Is looking good. I'm not going to get life in prison. I won't even get anymore time than what I allready have. I have read two book since I got here, one was 352 pages and the other had 200. I am enjoying reading more than ever. whenever I read a book It's like I'm no longer in jail I am were ever the book is about. I have been tring to remember all my vocab sounds and study them.

Linda, I would like to thank you for being such a careing person and teacher. I have learned so much from your class and by seeing that I can learn and that I am smart gives me reason to want to better myself.

I hope that I will be comeing back up there soon because I enjoy being abel to go to your classes and learning so much from you. If I can't get them to bring me back up there I want to thank you now for everything. Linda you have only been teaching me for a few months and I have never in my life enjoyed learning as much as I do now.

Thank you for believing in me.
Your friend and student,
Charles

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script) was legible, with each of the letters formed perfectly and each of the words separated by appropriate spacing.

There are students like Charles in *your* school. Their reading and writing skills are substandard, and not coincidentally, they are usually in trouble with their teachers, their parents, and the law. They hate school because they've never been successful. Unlike Charles, however, they *are* still in school. Their academic careers *can* be salvaged. That's the good news. The bad news is that many of them haven't yet discovered that they *are* smart and they *can* learn. They can't do it alone, however. They need intensive help right now. Your job as an instructional leader is to lead the way.

Resource A: Glossary

Basal readers are sets of books specifically designed to teach reading. They contain graded selections and are accompanied by comprehensive teachers' manuals and support materials. Basal readers were widely criticized in the past for their formulaic writing, and a more recent trend toward teaching students to read using trade books (literature) occurred in response to the poor quality of many basals.

Blending is the rapid combination of individual sounds corresponding to letters in a word that enables a student to decode and thereby "read" the word.

Cognitive strategies are also called *heuristics* and can be thought of as "procedures that students can use to help them understand and address higher-order tasks in areas such as reading comprehension and writing" (Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995, p.iii). In the broadest sense, a strategy is a "method or approach that incorporates the steps needed to reach a goal" (Weinstein & Hume, 1998, p. 103).

Context, according to Webster's definition, is "the parts of a sentence, paragraph, discourse, etc. that occur just before and after a specified word or passage, and determine its exact meaning" (McKechnie, 1983, p. 394). Reading researchers use the term context when discussing vocabulary study and have determined that readers with strong background knowledge can generally ascertain the meanings of unfamiliar words from context without direct instruction prior to reading.

Many early elementary teachers who use a whole-language approach to reading instruction encourage students to use context as a means of figuring out (decoding or pronouncing) what a new word is. This practice can often lead to what I call the "guessing syndrome" in which novice readers rely too heavily on pictures and other clues and do not use appropriate decoding strategies.

Developmental has taken on two meanings in the reading and early childhood literature. The term *developmental* is most commonly used to refer to stages of reading development through which students pass on their way to total reading proficiency (Chall, 1983/1986). Developmental has also come to mean "natural," something that will happen gradually over time as a child matures and cannot be taught. In some reading literature, "developmental" is considered to be the opposite of "learned."

Decoding is the ability to look at the printed page and translate it into language; phonics is a methodology used to teach decoding. An important prerequisite skill to successfully learning how to decode is phonemic awareness (Stanovich, 1993).

Decodable text is found in small books that are intentionally written to contain only the letter-sound (sound-spelling) correspondences that have been taught in a systematic phonics program. Early readers in a basal series should contain a high percentage of decodable text. The intent of providing reading material that matches children's letter-sound knowledge is to enable them to experience success in decoding words that follow the patterns they have learned (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 2-89). Some states (e.g., Texas and California) have specified the percentage of decodable text that publishers must include in early independent reading books.

Direct instruction, when written in lower case (direct instruction), refers to a style of teaching in which the teacher is "in charge" and has carefully structured the presentation as well as the responses desired from students. When the term appears capitalized (Direct Instruction), it refers to a specific teaching style originally developed at the University of Oregon.

Fluency is automaticity and flow in the act of reading. The act of repetitive decoding of a particular word helps to establish the spelling patterns of that word in memory. The most effective way for students to become fluent with a specific word is for them to consciously process both the letter patterns and sounds of the word the first few times it is read (Share, 1995; Share & Stanovich, 1995). Some students may need as many as 14 to 20 repetitions to gain total fluency.

Guided reading takes place when a teacher works with a small group of students who read on a similar level to read and talk about the text together. Students usually read the text orally. Students are supported in their reading by the teacher, as opposed to reading independently.

Literature-based instruction refers to reading from trade books as opposed to basal readers in which selections have often been abridged or written specifically for the textbook using a controlled vocabulary. In most classrooms using literature-based programs, teaching guides have been developed by individual teachers around specific themes or authors.

Matthew effect is a term with origins in the New Testament parable of the talents in which "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer": "For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away from him" (Matthew 25:29, Revised Standard Version). The phrase was first coined by Merton (1968) in science and used by Walberg and Tsai

(1983) in the field of education. As used in reading, the term describes the effect of reading deficits in phonemic awareness, vocabulary, or knowledge in kindergarten and 1st grade from which "poor" students almost never recover (Stanovich, 1986).

Metacognition is what you are thinking about your own thinking. "Metacognition reflects your ability to 'read' your own mental state and to assess how that state will affect your present and future performance" (Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1998, p. 21).

A **phoneme** is the most basic element of the language system: a sound. The ability to manipulate phonemes is called *phonemic awareness*.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds of the language, the ability to recognize individual sounds in words (e.g., rhyming, blending spoken sounds into words, counting phonemes). Phonemic awareness is a critical prerequisite to being able to learn sound-spelling correspondences. The lack of phonemic awareness skills in kindergarten or 1st grade is now thought by researchers to be the most accurate predictor of a future reading problem. Whole-language proponents qualify this definition: "ability to detect sounds in speech that are supposed to be represented by the letters of the alphabet" (Smith, 1994, p. 312).

Phonics has sometimes served as a code word or rallying cry for those who support teaching basic skills in a direct and sequential way as opposed to those who advocate a more developmental approach to reading instruction. Parents even label schools as "phonics schools" or "whole-language schools," even though phonics instruction at its very best will consume no more than half of the language arts activities in kindergarten or 1st grade. Phonics (stripped of its political baggage) is an instructional method for teaching students to sound out words rather than reading them as a "whole" or guessing what they might be on the basis of context. Smith (1994, p. 312) defines phonics as "reading instruction based on the *assumption* that reading is decoding to sound and requires learning spelling-to-sound correspondences."

Most parents and even many educators do not understand the variety of phonics programs currently in use: synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, embedded phonics, analogy phonics, onset-rime phonics, and phonics through spelling (National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 2-81). Regardless of the approach taken by the phonics program, "the goal in all phonics programs is to enable learners to acquire sufficient knowledge and use of the alphabetic code so that they can make normal progress in learning to read and comprehend written language" (pp. 2-81).

Reading is a process in which information from the text and the knowledge possessed by the reader act together to produce meaning (National Academy of Education, 1985, p. 8).

Repeated reading occurs when a section of text or a short book is read repeatedly to develop accuracy, fluency, and automaticity.

Sight Words are words that students have memorized and can "read" on sight. In beginning reading instruction, irregular words that are difficult or impossible to decode are taught to students as sight words.

Strategic learners are students who

> approach educational activities or tasks with a high degree of confidence that they can do the tasks, or at least with a sense that they have a good idea of how to try to complete them. Such learners are diligent and resourceful in their efforts and do not give up easily, even in the face of difficulty. (Weinstein & Hume, 1998, p. 10)

Vocabulary instruction is direct instruction in the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Whole language as described by Ken Goodman (as quoted in Martinez, 1997), one of the principal proponents to teachers of the philosophy, is "a pedagogy, or a way that teachers think about teaching; a bringing together [of] everything we've learned about how language works in terms of learning [and] how learning to read and write is an extension of oral language" (p. 11). Frank Smith (1994), a psycholinguist and whole-language advocate, defines whole language as "an educational movement based on the belief that language learning takes place most effectively when learners are engaged collaboratively in meaningful and purposeful uses of language, as opposed to exercises, drills, and tests" (p. 313). It is sometimes referred to as the *naturalistic approach* or as *child-centered learning*, and is known in Britain as *real books*.

Word analysis is sometimes called *word attack*. Tests of word analysis measure how well students have mastered consonant sounds and blends, vowel sounds, and polysyllabic words. Older students frequently fool us regarding their knowledge of sound-spelling correspondences because they have memorized so many words. Their poor spelling is often the indicator of deficient word attack skills.

Word recognition is the fluent and automatic sounding out of words. Rapid word recognition is essential for fluent reading and adequate comprehension.

Resource B: Programs for Learning to Read

The four programs described in this appendix are designed to meet the learning-to-read needs of low-achievers or nonreaders. Each program is unique but highly successful.

- Reading Is FAME was designed by two outstanding Harvard-trained reading educators, Mary Beth Curtis and Ann Marie Longo, to meet the needs of the students who enroll at Father Flanagan's Boys Town (NE).
- Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes were originally developed for use in clinical settings but have more recently been adapted for schoolwide use. The phonemic-awareness program (LiPS) was originally conceived by Patricia Lindamood, a speech pathologist, and her husband, Charles, a linguist. Nanci Bell, the other half of the Lindamood-Bell team, developed the spelling and comprehension components of the program.
- The Spalding Method, described in Spalding and Spalding's (1957/1990) book, *The Writing Road to Reading*, uses a multisensory approach that combines the teaching of reading, writing, spelling, and speaking. The Spalding Program is unique among reading programs in that it is also a comprehensive writing and spelling program.
- Corrective Reading is part of the Direct Instruction family of instructional materials that was developed at the University of Oregon under the direction of Siegfrid Engelmann. Direct Instruction and its beginning-reading program, Reading Mastery, are validated by an extensive research base (Stebbins, St. Pierre, Proper, Anderson, & Cerva, 1977).

Reading Is FAME

The Boys Town reading program, Reading Is FAME, has been designed specifically for adolescents who have reading difficulties. It is based on Jeanne Chall's (1983/1986) Stages of Reading Development. There are four courses in the curriculum.

Course 1, Foundations of Reading, is designed for young adults reading below the 4th-grade level. The goals in this class are to teach the most common letter-sound correspondences and to provide opportunities to apply this knowledge while reading books aloud. About 8 to 10 students make up a Foundations class, taught by a teacher and assisted by a paraprofessional. For about 10 minutes each day, students work in pairs on spelling software, which has been customized to teach up to 17 different phonics rules. Groups of students also spend about 10 minutes each day playing a game (e.g., Concentration or Wheel of Fortune) with words that fit the rule they have been practicing. Students learn very quickly that time is limited, and they know that the more they are on-task, the more fun they will have. The remainder of class each day is spent in a small group, 4 to 5 with a teacher, reading aloud from a novel. Novels are at a high enough reading level to provide practice in applying the phonics rules being learned and interesting enough to make the effort it takes to do so worthwhile.

The reading is done collaboratively, with students and teacher taking turns reading and passing back and forth at unexpected times. This technique requires that every student follow along and stay engaged in the reading. The teacher supplies unknown words when necessary, while at the same time, encouraging students to identify unfamiliar words. Short, informal discussions about the novels help to maintain comprehension and interest as well. Homework assignments in the Foundations course include activities like syllable cloze activities, finding words that do and do not fit rules, and sentence writing.

Course 2, Adventures in Reading, is intended for adolescents and young adults reading between the 4th and 6th grade levels. The goals in this course are to improve students' ability to recognize words and their meanings and to increase oral reading fluency.

As in Foundations, students work in pairs, for about 10 minutes each day, on computer software customized to improve their reading vocabulary. Students also spend about 10 minutes each day in small groups playing games that provide practice with the words (e.g., Password and Jeopardy).

Oral reading is also included in Course 2, and the emphasis continues to be on application and enjoyment during reading. In Adventures, however, fluency, rather than accuracy, is the focus. Homework assignments in the Adventures course include crossword puzzles, cloze sentences, and analogies that provide additional practice on the same words used in the day's computer software and games.

Mastery of Meaning, Course 3, is designed for young adults reading between the 6th and 8th grade levels. The goal in Mastery is to build up knowledge of word meanings to improve comprehension. The classes contain anywhere from 10 to 15 students per teacher. The design of the activities and materials in Mastery are based on five principles of effective vocabulary instruction drawn from the research literature (McKeown & Curtis, 1987): (a) students get numerous opportunities to learn words and meanings; (b) words are presented in a variety of contexts; (c) students are asked to process words in active and generative ways; (d) distinctions as well as similarities among words' meanings are stressed; and (e) improvement in students' ability to use words in speaking and writing, as well as to recognize their meanings, is emphasized.

Students' reading in the Mastery course occurs mostly in informational texts. Because they are now making the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn," much of the reading is done silently. Homework assignments in the Mastery course include writing assignments using target vocabulary words along with cloze passages and sentence completions.

Explorations, the fourth and final course, is intended for young adults reading at the 8th-grade level and beyond. The goal in Explorations is to promote the ability to integrate information via both reading and writing. Students are taught study skills such as note taking and summarizing in the context of materials taken from a variety of content areas.

Students practice using study skills when they work on problem-solving software. Use of study skills is also required in an activity called the Explorations Board, where students are asked to respond in writing to short-answer and essay questions. Homework in Explorations provides additional practice in using reading and writing as tools for learning.[1]

Research Results

Students who take the Foundations course average 1 or more years of growth for one semester of instruction on individually administered basic reading measures. Oral reading rates and performance on an overall course spelling test also improve. Gains for students who take the Adventures course average 1.5 or more years of growth for one semester of instruction on an individually administered measure of word recognition and vocabulary. Students also show improvement on measures of oral reading and a course vocabulary test.

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[1] This description of Reading Is FAME has been adapted by permission from Curtis & Longo (1997) and the Reading Is FAME promotional brochure.

For students who take the Mastery course, gains on group-administered measures of vocabulary and comprehension average about 1 year of growth for 1 year of instruction. Students' ability to recognize and use the course vocabulary words in writing also improves.

Students who take the Explorations course average about 6 months' growth for 18 weeks of instruction on group-administered comprehension measures. Students' ability to use study skills taught in the course, such as note taking and summarizing, also show improvement.

For those students who have taken all four courses in the curriculum, gains on individually administered tests of basic reading and vocabulary improve from below the 4th-grade level to the 8th-grade level and above within a 2-year period (Father Flanagans's Boys Home, 1996).

Books and Resource Materials

Curtis, M. B., & Longo, A. M. (1999). *When adolescents can't read.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline (Brookline Books: 1-800-666-BOOK).

Curtis, M. B., & Longo, A. M. (n.d.). *Reversing reading failure at Boys Town.* (Available on request from Boys Town)

Staff Development Options

Boys Town staff members will come to your site and train teachers to use the program's methods and materials. Boys Town Center staff will also return to your site once implementation has begun to observe in classrooms and address any questions or concerns.

Program Information

Boys Town Reading Center
Father Flanagan's Boys Home
Boys Town, Nebraska 68010
(402) 498-1075

Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes

The Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes Company produces three programs to meet the needs of low-achieving or nonreaders: (a) Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LiPS), (b) Seeing Stars: Symbol Imagery for Sight

Words and Spelling, and (c) Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking. The programs can be used singly or in combination.

Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (LiPS)

The Lindamood-Bell group was a pioneer in the development of a pure phonemic-awareness program, first called Auditory Discrimination in Depth and now called Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (Lindamood & Lindamood, 1998). Although the program was developed for one-on-one treatment in a clinical setting, it has now been refined for use in a variety of school settings.

LiPS is a true linguistic program, meaning that it teaches sounds before letters. LiPS teaches the 44 phonemes by a process of discovery, feeling movements of the mouth, and watching these movements in a mirror. The program incorporates a new vocabulary to talk about phonemes (e.g., lip poppers: /b/, /p/ or nasals: /m/, /n/, /ng/) and helps students analyze and track phonemes using colored blocks and constantly engages the student in Socratic questioning so as to enable the learner to become independent and self-correcting.

The LiPS program draws on the sciences of linguistics and speech pathology, to develop awareness of the articulatory gestures that produce the phonemes. Rather than identifying some vowels as "long" and "short," which can seem arbitrary because each vowel can be said in a sustained "long" way or a brief "short way," the 15 vowel sounds are categorized and classified in just 4 groups. Second, the oral-motor feedback for consonants and vowels is used to track and verify the identity, number, and order of phonemes in syllables and words (Lindamood, Bell & Lindamood, 1997, p. 154).

Seeing Stars: Symbol Imagery for Sight Words and Spelling

Seeing Stars successfully develops symbol imagery. The program begins with visualizing individual letters and extends into multisyllables, contextual reading, and spelling. Teachers work with students to image letters in words and apply that imagery to phonetic processing, sight words, spelling, and reading fluency. Students who have learned phonics and can sound out words but who still have difficulties reading because of slow phonetic processing benefit from Seeing Stars. When word identification and reading fluency have not improved at the same rate as word attack skills, this program can often provide the missing piece in the learning-to-read puzzle.

Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking

This program is designed to meet the needs of students who can read words accurately but cannot comprehend content. If words seemingly go in one ear and out the other, the student is probably having difficulty creating an imaged gestalt—a whole. This is the result of weak concept imagery. Visualizing and Verbalizing stimulates concept imagery. Individuals learn to image gestalts to improve their language comprehension, reasoning for critical thinking, and expressive language skills.[2]

Resource Materials

Bell, N. (1997). *Seeing stars*. San Louis Obispo, CA: Gander.

Bell, N. (1986). *Visualizing and verbalizing for language comprehension and thinking*. San Luis Obispo, CA: Gander.

Lindamood, P., Bell, N., & Lindamood, P. (1997) Sensory-cognitive factors in the controversy over reading instruction. *Journal of Developmental and Learning Disorders, 1,* 143-182. Contact Lindamood-Bell for a free copy of this article.

Lindamood, P., & Lindamood, P. (1998). *Lindamood phoneme sequencing program*. San Luis Obispo, CA: Gander.

Staff Development Options

Training workshops for teachers are offered at sites around the country. Call for information regarding workshops in your area. You can also contract with Lindamood-Bell to bring training to your school district.

Program Information

Lindamood-Bell Human Learning Processes
416 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Paul Worthington, Director of Research
(800) 233-1819

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[2] The descriptions of the Lindamood-Bell processes have been adapted from advertising literature.

The Spalding Method

The Spalding Method is based on the work of Romalda Bishop Spalding who trained directly under Samuel Orton. Romalda Spalding received degrees at the University of Illinois and Columbia University but discovered that her preparation was not adequate for teaching all students to read and write successfully. Her search for a better method led her in 1938 to the distinguished neurologist, Dr. Samuel T. Orton. Spalding soon realized that the children taught using Dr. Orton's technique experienced more success than her regular education students. Drawing on what she learned from Dr. Orton and her own experience working with children at Massachusetts General Hospital, Children's Hospital at Harvard Medical School, and public and private schools as a classroom teacher, she wrote the textbook, *The Writing Road to Reading* (Spalding & Spalding, 1957/1990), the same book that Linda Taylor used to teach Robert and Charles to read.

The Spalding's is a total-language-arts approach that incorporates the following five features (North, 1995, p. 217): (a) the teacher provides an exemplary model of pronunciation of speech sounds; (b) students accurately reproduce speech sounds; (c) the teacher shows written symbols with simultaneous presentation of speech sounds; (d) students simultaneously say speech sounds and write symbols; and (e) students blend sounds to produce words, apply pronunciation skills to oral reading, and use strategies to enhance comprehension. "A rather significant and up to date body of data has been assembled showing the indisputable success that many schools are enjoying with the Spalding Method" (Aukerman, 1984, p. 541). Farnham-Diggory (1987), director of the Reading Study Center at the University of Delaware, selected the Spalding Method for use in the reading clinic there because of its well-developed theories of reading processes, reading development, skill learning, and instruction.[3]

Colleen Palmer teaches 7th-grade reading at the Saladao Middle School (TX). She was first employed as the district's 7th-grade reading teacher for the 1997-1998 school year. Her background as a speech pathologist had convinced her of the value of phonemic awareness and intensive, systematic phonics training in the development of successful readers. She decided to give an intensive review of phonics rules under the auspices of spelling instruction to all of the school's 7th graders. She had never taught at the middle school level before but was convinced of the worth of her methods and materials. She used the *Johnny Can Spell and Write* program (Dickson, 1998), which is based on *The Writing Road to Reading* (Spalding & Spalding, 1957/1990). Linda's training in the Spalding Method led her to believe it could be used at all levels, not just in early elementary school. Her students responded enthusiastically as she introduced phonemes, rules for long and short vowels, and syllabication, none of which had ever been taught to them systematically. She maintained their interest with a fast-paced daily presentation and review. When the Texas Assessment of Academic Standards (TAAS) results were released for the 1997-1998 school year, 89% of the 7th-grade class met the minimum reading standards.

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[3] This description the Spalding Reading Program has been adapted by permission from Spalding promotional literature.

During the second year (1998-1999), Colleen varied her program somewhat but maintained a strong emphasis on phonemic awareness and the phonics rules for spelling. She was more confident and expected more from the students the second time around. The TAAS results showed a 92% mastery level for her students that year. In the third year, as Colleen refined her instructional techniques to better match her students, 96% of her 7th graders met minimum standards (C. Palmer, personal communication, July, 2000).

Books and Resource Materials

North, M. (1995). The effects of Spalding instruction on special education students. In C. W. McIntyre & J. S. Pickering (Eds.), *Clinical studies of multisensory structured language education for students with dyslexia and related disorders* (pp. 217-224). Salem, OR: Multisensory Structured Language Education Council.

Spalding, R. B., & Spalding, W. T. (1990). *The writing road to reading: The Spalding Method of phonics for teaching speech, writing & reading* (4th rev. ed.). New York: William Morrow. (Original work published in 1957)

Staff Development Options

Spalding offers a professional development plan for certifying tutors, teachers, and teacher-instructors in The Spalding Method. The plan includes observations, evaluations, coaching, and inservice tailored to specific needs.

Program Information

The Spalding Education Foundation
2814 West Bell Road, Suite 1405, Phoenix, AZ 85023
Dr. Mary North, Director of Research
(602) 866-7801

Corrective Reading

Corrective Reading is a remedial program for students in Grades 4 through 12. The goal of Corrective Reading is to accelerate learning so those students who have fallen behind can catch up with their peers. The tightly sequenced, scripted lessons provide hard-to-teach students with the structure they need to learn, practice, and master the essential decoding and comprehension skills. There are four instructional levels in both the decoding and comprehension programs, and students are assigned to a level according to placement test performance (Grossen, 2000). Corrective Reading uses a direct-instruction approach and is the counterpart for Grades 4 to 12 to Reading Mastery, a program to teach beginning readers. If you are unfamiliar with direct instruction, you may be wondering what makes it different from any other kind of instruction. In his review on teacher effectiveness, Rosenshine (1979) summarized it thusly:

> Direct instruction refers to high levels of student engagement within academically focused, teacher-directed classrooms using sequenced, structured materials. [It] refers to teaching activities focused on academic matters where goals are clear to students; time allocated for instruction is sufficient and continuous; content coverage is extensive; student performance is monitored; questions are at a low cognitive level and produce many correct responses; and feedback to students is immediate and academically oriented. In direct instruction, the teacher controls instructional goals, chooses material appropriate for the student's ability level, and paces the instructional episode. Interaction is characterized as structured, but not authoritarian; rather, learning takes place in a convivial academic atmosphere. (p. 17)

Resource Materials

Carnine, D. W., Silbert, J., & Kameenui, E. J. *Direct instruction in reading* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Staff Development Options

Contact Dr. Bonnie Grossen at the University of Oregon for staff development options. She can be reached at bgrossen@oregon.uoregon.edu or (541) 686-9185.

Program Information

SRA-McGraw Hill
(888) SRA-4543
http://www.sra4kids.com

Resource C:
Strategic Reading Programs

The following programs are designed to teach cognitive strategies to students:

- The Benchmark School is a private school whose students are bright but have reading difficulties. In a regular school setting, many of the students would be classified as dyslexic or learning disabled. At the Benchmark School, founded and still led by Irene Gaskins, students master cognitive strategies that make them the envy of their classmates when they return to their public and private schools in 9th grade and earn highest honors in high school.
- Reading Across the Disciplines (RAD), designed and currently administered by Reading and Language Arts Coordinator, Nancy Rathjen, is a well-established program in the middle and high schools of Parkway, a suburban St. Louis district. Every student receives RAD instruction throughout the 6th grade to 12th grade sequence.
- The HOTS program, developed by University of Arizona educational psychologist, Stanley Pogrow, teaches cognitive strategies in a computer laboratory setting to Title-I-identified students. There is much to be learned about strategy instruction from each of these programs.

The Benchmark School

The history of the Benchmark School of Philadelphia (PA) must command the attention of any school principal considering how to raise reading achievement. Opened with just one class of poor readers in 1970, the school has grown under the leadership of Gaskins to a student body of 188 students composed entirely of privately funded students whose primary referring problem is poor reading despite average or better intelligence (p. 5). What distinguishes the Benchmark School from the majority of schools has been its development of a research-based cognitive-strategy instruction program that pervades every aspect of school life. Working with eminent reading researchers Richard Anderson, Jonathan Baron, and Michael Pressley, the staff of Benchmark has focused on teaching thinking skills while imparting knowledge. The 83 staff members (15 head teachers supported by coteachers and support teachers) teach a core group of 17 strategies for meaning and remembering.

In addition to the core strategies, two stand-alone courses on learning and thinking are required that teach students how the mind works. These courses provide students with a rationale for learning the strategies that are being taught in their other classes. Gaskins (Gaskins & Elliott, 1991) believes that teaching students about the inner workings of the mind gives staff and students a common language for discussing the processing of information (p. 99) and helps them to understand the "why" as well as the "what" of strategic learning. For example, middle school students "are regularly reminded that their goal is to become goal-driven, planful, strategic, self-assessing students. Regular discussions ensue regarding *why* they think this goal is important and *how* it can be accomplished" (p. 64).

Gaskins offers seven suggestions to principals contemplating the implementation of a reading strategies program: (a) select innovations that meet demonstrated needs of students, (b) involve the staff, (c) help teachers acquire knowledge, (d) foster an attitude of becoming, (e) create a safe environment for expressing concerns, (f) expect change to take time and to require ongoing support, and (g) set aside time to reflect and renew (Gaskins & Elliott, 1991, pp. 189-203).

Staff Development

The Benchmark School offers summer staff development opportunities taught in the Philadelphia area. They do not provide on-site training.

Books and Resource Materials

Gaskins, I. W., & Elliot, T. T. (1991). *Implementing cognitive strategy instruction across the school: The benchmark manual for teachers.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

Pressley, M., Burkell, J., Cariglia-Bull, T., Lysynchuk, L., McGoldrick, J. A., Schneider, B., Snyder, B., Symons, S., & Woloshyn, V. E. (1995). *Cognitive strategy instruction that really improves children's academic performance.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

Wood, E., Woloshyn, V. E., & Willoughby, T. (1995). *Cognitive strategy instruction for middle and high schools.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

Program Information

The Benchmark School
Address: 2107 N. Providence Road, Media, PA
Attn: Irene Gaskins
(610) 565-3741
Benchmarkinfo@aol.com
http://www.Benchmarkschool.org

Reading Across the Disciplines

The RAD program is a systematic integration of reading strategies and study skills into the curricula of social studies, language arts, science, math, and elective subjects. The RAD program began with a pilot at Parkway Central Middle School from 1988 through 1990, expanded to all Parkway secondary schools, and is presently being piloted in the elementary schools. The Parkway School District, located in west St. Louis County, encompasses nine different communities and 68 square miles. Parkway's students represent a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds: students speak 27 languages. Approximately 22,000 students are enrolled in the district's 18 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 4 high schools, and 1 alternative high school. This enrollment makes Parkway the largest school district in St. Louis County and the fourth largest in the state. The district employs 1,350 teachers with an average of 18 years of teaching experience.

Now entering its ninth year of implementation, RAD is the formal incorporation of reading techniques and study skills into the content of established curriculum. Figure 4.1 provides a framework for classroom teachers to focus on reading development.

During the 1990-1991 school year, 8th-grade interdisciplinary teams across the district implemented the RAD program as a yearlong interdisciplinary team project. Expansion began with 7th-grade pilots at three middle schools and 25% of the high school staff. The 7th-grade pilots and high school staff participation expanded the following year. An expansion to the 6th grade was piloted in the 1994-1995 school year. During the 1995-

1996 school year, all 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade teams at five middle schools (with reinforcement at the high schools) were actively implementing reading and study skill instruction using the RAD program (see Figure 4.2).

The focus grade levels for RAD in Parkway continues to be the middle school for several reasons. A significant number of students are unable to adapt reading skills learned in elementary schools to reading situations they encounter in secondary schools. In spite of the abundance of research advocating reading instruction as an integral part of the content area classroom, data suggest that in reality, content area teachers spend a negligible amount of time showing students how to use such strategies.

Interdisciplinary teaming provides the ideal opportunity for a group of teachers to teach reading using a regular, systematic approach. Interdisciplinary reading units correlated to current curriculum materials are presented in all classes.

The ultimate goal of the project is the internalization and application of effective reading strategies. Success of the project was evaluated with various indicators. In addition, subjective evaluation by parent surveys, teacher observations, and student evaluation provided overwhelmingly positive support.

In 1988 and 1989, students on the RAD pilot team were assessed using the Degrees of Reading Power test and achieved four times the growth of students on the control team. Special emphasis was placed on helping at-risk students achieve. At-risk student growth results supported the observations of the teachers who believed their students were progressing well. Whereas at-risk students on the control team increased their score 2 percentile points, at-risk students on the RAD team improved their performance 23 percentile points.

During the following year of the project, pilot teams exceeded those results. In addition, pilot teams replicated both the average student growth by team and at-risk student growth. During the third year of evaluation, the RAD program exceeded the average reading comprehension growth shown by 8th-grade students during the previous 2 years of the program. Subsequent middle schools piloting the program not only met these results in their respective first and second years but also exceeded the previous results. The reading growth has remained consistent over the life of the program. Clearly, the more encouragement and reinforcement students get in the practice of RAD reading strategies and study skills, the more likely their progress in reading will carry over to high school.

An additional follow-up study of the original pilot 8th-grade students was conducted during the year these students were scheduled to graduate from high school. The results of this study indicated that compared with similar students who did not receive RAD in 8th grade, those who did were significantly more likely to be at an age-appropriate grade level and still be enrolled in school. This "RAD effect" was even more noticeable among the at-risk students who participated in the original pilot. Many of the students in the control group who were performing below average in reading as 8th graders were no longer enrolled, and less than half made it to the age-appropriate level of 12th grade. Yet all (100%) of the at-risk readers who received RAD training in 8th grade were still in school.

The impact on the budget to implement and support the program is minimal. The only two additional cost items are (a) printing of units developed to correlate study skills and reading techniques with specific curriculum materials and (b) inservice workshops for all content teachers. Development of the staff as confident teachers of reading and study skills must overlay the already superior job of teaching content. Orientation and training of teachers new to the program at a summer workshop to understand the techniques involved in teaching the units is essential for success. Summer workshops provide the background, knowledge, confidence, and practice with new strategies for teachers to implement the units during the school year. In addition, once a teacher is introduced to the program, follow-up training and assistance help ensure that implementation occurs. Introductory and intermediate workshops have continued through the life of the program.

The parent-child-teacher connection occurs through correlation of the RAD units with strategies recommended in the Parkway publication, *A Parent's Guide to Study Skills*. Also, *The Principal's Newsletter* highlights learning strategies in regular articles and suggests effective ways for parents to reinforce the strategy at home. The RAD program is presented to parents at PTO parent forums held regularly throughout the district.

In addition to the Parkway School District where the program was developed with a middle school team of teachers, the program has been implemented at many school districts across the country with similar results. The program appears to be most effective when three variables are in place: (a) interdisciplinary teams of teachers, (b) primary focus at the middle school level and reinforcement at the high school level, and (c) a reading teacher or classroom teacher with a change of responsibility from small group remediation to RAD coordinator. Responsibilities of the reading teachers include working with classroom teachers in planning and presenting RAD units, developing RAD units that correlate with current curriculum materials and textbooks, working with targeted students for frontloading of units, and most important, keeping teams on track with scope and sequence.

With expansion across grade levels, RAD has made a significant difference in reading and study skills for students. The goal for RAD is for students to learn and apply the most effective reading and study methods in content area classes and, in the process, become reflective, independent learners. Experience and test scores confirm continued achievement of this goal.[1]

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[1] The text describing RAD is reprinted by permission of the author, Nancy Rathjen © 1995.

Program Information

Nancy Rathjen
Reading Across the Disciplines
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St. Louis, MO 63122
radnancy@aol.com
(314) 821-3157

HOTS: Higher-Order Thinking Skills

The Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) Project is an alternative approach to Title I for grades 4 through 8 in which the compensatory activities consist solely of systematically designed higher-order thinking activities (Pogrow,1995). Traditional drill and practice activities and content instruction are eliminated. The 2 years of thinking activities are designed to generate gains in basic skills expected from Title I programs, while also improving thinking ability and social confidence. By learning how to learn, students are then able to learn content the first time it is taught in the classroom. The program is conducted in a computer lab using a detailed curriculum taught by a teacher specially trained in Socratic dialogue techniques. The teacher is the most critical component of the program, and the program will not be successful without the right teacher. The curriculum is designed in accordance with information-processing theories of cognition. The program operates as a pull-out program for 35 minutes a day, 4 days a week, for 2 years. In the first part of the period, the teacher engages students in sophisticated conversations. Students are then given a challenge that they go to the computer to try to solve. They will later discuss their findings and approaches and how they know whether their strategy for solving the problem did or did not work. HOTS is unique in its ability to produce significant gains in achievement in later grade levels (Darmer, 1995). It is the only remedial program that treats students as though they were gifted and that relies strictly on activities that challenge them intellectually. There is no content remediation or work sheets.

HOTS has been in use for over 15 years as a Title-I-validated program, and schools in which it is used consistently win awards. For example, West Avenue Elementary School in the Northeast School District in Texas was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an exemplary Title I program. In addition, three other HOTS schools in the district received state recognition in 1994 for having at least 70% of the Title I students pass the Texas statewide assessment (Pogrow, 1995).

Envisioning a HOTS classroom is sometimes difficult because it is so different from other settings where strategy instruction goes on. Let's take a look at a typical one. It could well be Kathy Nerychel's computer laboratory at the Lakeview Middle School (MI). She has been a HOTS teacher for

6 years and is a nurturing and flexible teacher who understands middle school students and their unique needs and characteristics. In this Title I classroom, there are no work books or work sheets. In fact, students don't even pick up a pencil during today's 45-minute class period (they do on some occasions) until the close of the period when they record their results in a lab notebook. During the first half of the period, Kathy engages the students in a question-and-answer period, probing in accordance with the Socratic method in which she has been especially trained. Although she is following a prescribed dialogue, there is plenty of room for creativity as dramatic techniques are often used to heighten student curiosity and motivation. The discussions are designed to develop metacognition, inference from context, decontextualization (making associations among related concepts in different contexts), and information synthesis. This is "mind-bending" work at its best. Following the discussion, students work on their own computers for the rest of the period. The feedback generated from the computers as students work with a variety of software programs provides a continuous flow of information for the student to process, which leads to improvements in his or her personal comprehension and problem solving.

The software programs are incidental to the discussion, however, as learning comes from the conversation that focuses on the students "thinking about" what they are doing and why it is or isn't working. Kathy is constantly probing the students to articulate their ideas and explain how and why the computer is reacting to their strategies the way it is. This constant pressing of students to examine and explain their strategies increases the sophistication of their language use, both in terms of comprehension and articulation. The increased sophistication of language use enhances students' ability to learn all content. There is no management system in this classroom and no grades. Success is demonstrated by the products generated by the students, their articulation of findings, and the results they record in their lab notebook. The process doesn't seem to be teaching reading comprehension, but the students who attend the class four times a week during the school year make progress remarkable in all areas of standardized testing, not just reading. In Kathy's classroom, the writing process is integrated with reading, speaking, and listening. She frequently can be heard saying to students, "I know you don't know. But if you did know, what might you say?" Kathy keeps her students on task with several creative methods: (a) every students' name is placed on an index card, and the cards are constantly shuffled to keep the students on their toes regarding who will be next up; (b) a "ticket in" method is used in which students have to give an oral or written response to a question to move to their computers; and (c) a "ticket out" method is used in which students need to answer a question be dismissed for the day. Kathy finds the most beneficial aspect of HOTS to be the Socratic method of questioning in which the teacher keeps probing for a complete answer. "Too often," she says, "students keep quiet and teachers keep going on, or students talk forever and don't get to the point." She's not satisfied with either of these approaches, and her training has helped her to know just when to push or back off. Kathy works with the staff to support their content instruction in her instruction (K. Nerychel, personal communication, June, 2000).

Staff Development Options

A weeklong workshop is provided to HOTS teachers on how to use Socratic techniques while teaching the HOTS curriculum. Teachers are trained in how to maintain an active learning environment in which students are given the time and responsibility to think through problems and articulate their ideas.

Research is available from HOTS. HOTS students show gains in reading (and mathematics) that are double the national Title I average. Interestingly enough, in some schools, HOTS students are rediagnosed as gifted students after graduating from the HOTS program.

Program Information

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Resource D: Goals at a Glance

A complete set of the figures found in the book is included in sequence by chapter for your convenience. Use them to review the contents of the book, to refocus your energies on the "big ideas" of raising reading achievement in middle and high schools, or as visuals for a presentation to your Reading Improvement Task Force or your faculty. One copy of each may be reproduced for educational purposes.

FIGURE P.1

Goals at a Glance: Five Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Raising Reading Achievement

Five Simple-to-Follow Strategies for Raising Reading Achievement

1. Focus on changing what you can change.

2. Teach the students who can't read how to read.

3. Teach every student how to read to learn.

4. Motivate all students to read *more* books, to read increasingly *more challenging* books, and to *be accountable* for what they read.

5. Create a reading culture in your school.

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FIGURE 2.1
Goals at a Glance: Twelve Alterable Variables

Twelve Alterable Variables

1. Change how you state your goals.
2. Change how you choose what to teach.
3. Change the alignment of what you teach.
4. Change what you teach.
5. Change the amount of time you spend teaching it.
6. Change where you teach it.
7. Change how you teach it.
8. Change who is teaching it.
9. Change the amount of time students spend practicing what you teach.
10. Change how you assess what you teach.
11. Change your expectations for students.
12. Change how you group to teach.

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FIGURE 3.1
How Children Learn to Read

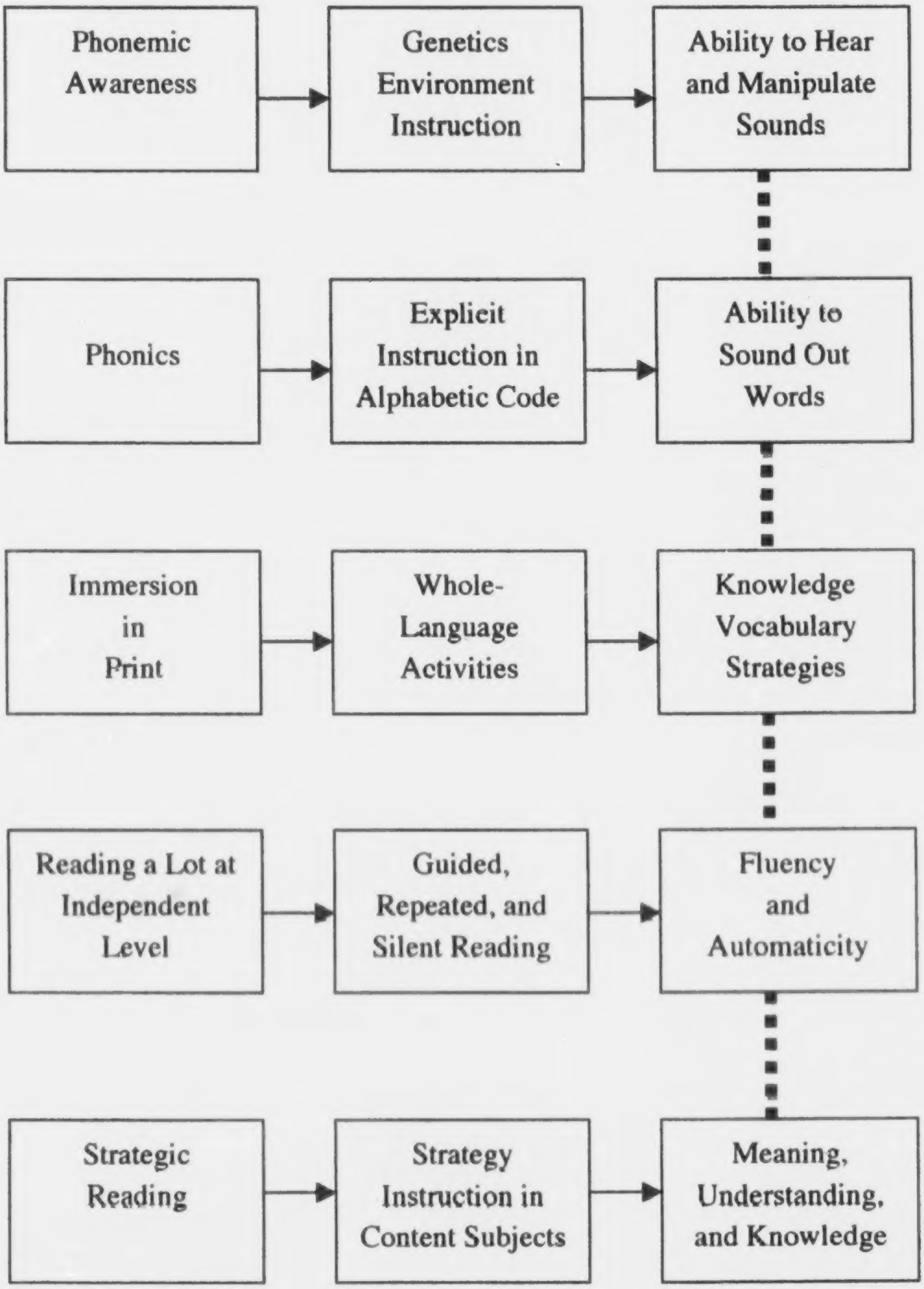
Phonemic Awareness
Genetics Environment Instruction
Ability to Hear and Manipulate Sounds
Phonics
Explicit Instruction in Alphabetic Code
Ability to Sound Out Words
Immersion in Print
Whole-Language Activities
Knowledge Vocabulary Strategies
Reading a Lot at Independent Level
Guided, Repeated, and Silent Reading
Fluency and Automaticity
Strategic Reading
Strategy Instruction in Content Subjects
Meaning, Understanding, and Knowledge

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FIGURE 3.2
Goals at a Glance: Learning to Read

Learning to Read: The Essentials for Every Child

Phonemic Awareness: the ability to hear and manipulate sounds

Phonics: the ability to sound out (decode) and spell words using the 44 sound-spelling correspondences

Immersion in Print: the development of knowledge, vocabulary, and simple comprehension strategies prior to learning how to read independently

Reading a Lot: the development of fluency and automaticity in reading

Strategic Reading Ability: the ability to gain meaning, understanding, and knowledge from the printed page

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FIGURE 4.1
The Strategic Reader

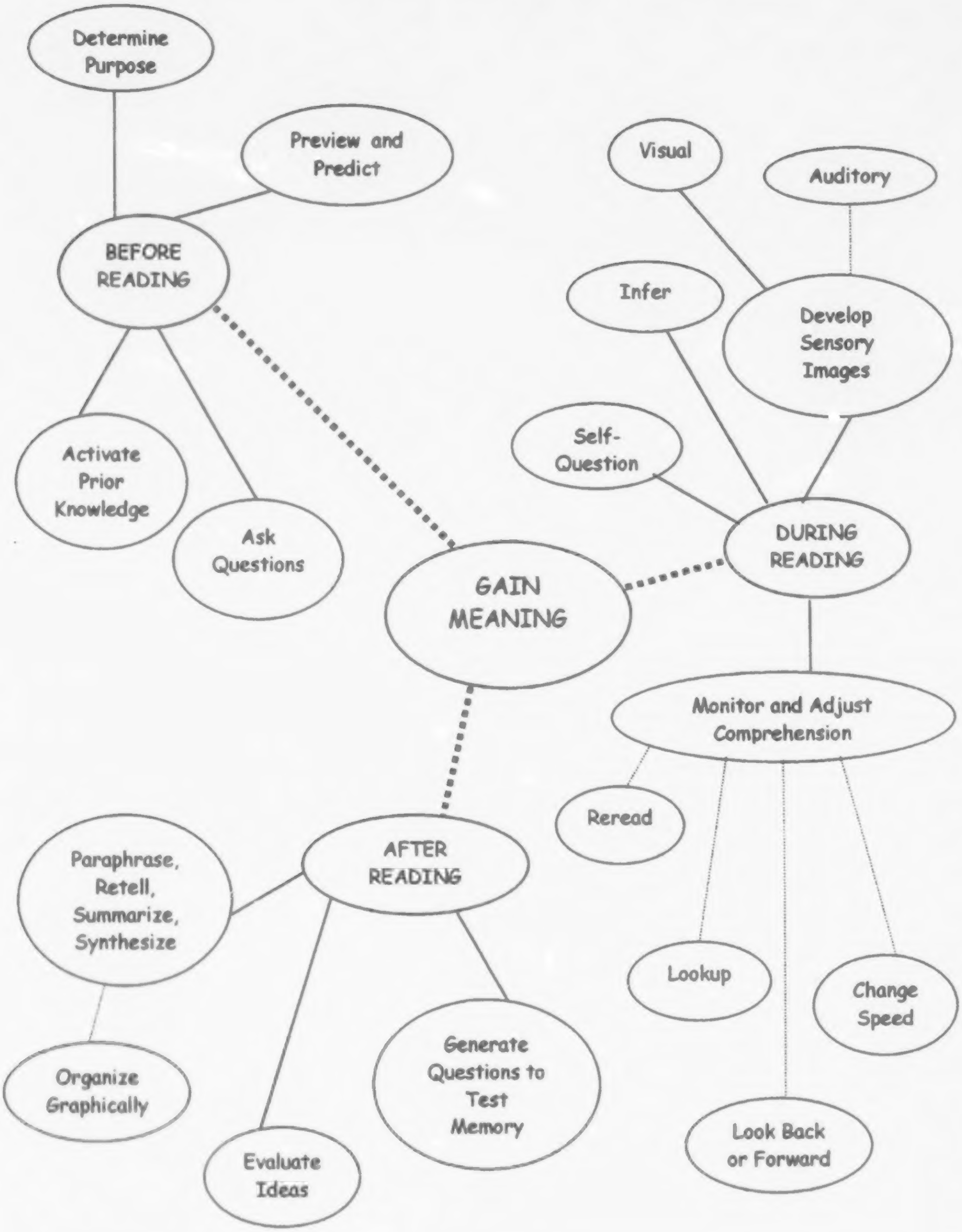
Determine Purpose
Preview and Predict
BEFORE READING
Activate Prior Knowledge
Ask Questions
Visual
Auditory
Infer
Develop Sensory Images
Self-Question
DURING READING
GAIN MEANING
Monitor and Adjust Comprehension
Reread
Lookup
Change Speed
Look Back or Forward
AFTER READING
Paraphrase, Retell, Summarize, Synthesize
Organize Graphically
Evaluate Ideas
Generate Questions to Test Memory

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FIGURE 4.2
The Strategic Teacher

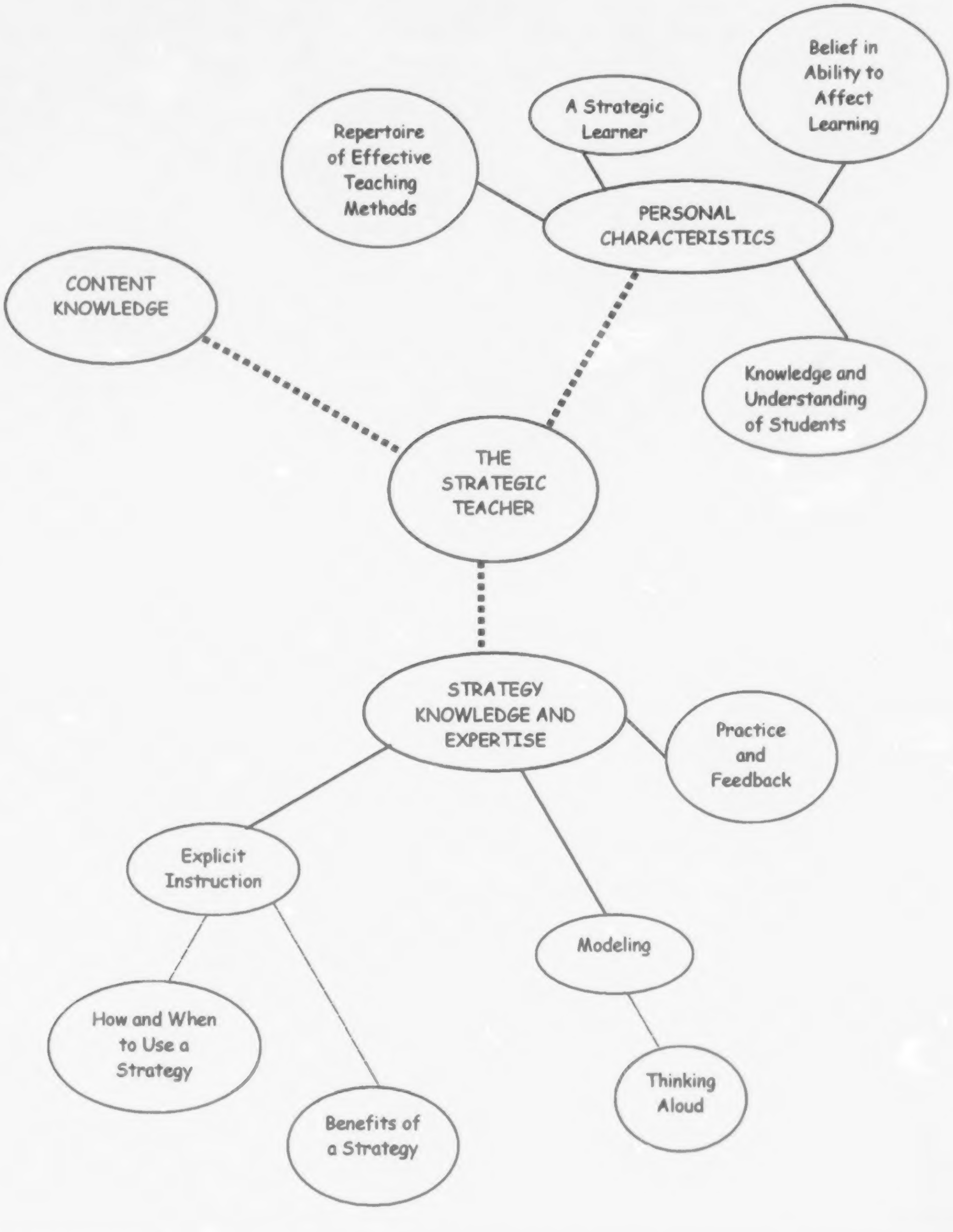
Belief in Ability to Affect Learning
A Strategic Learner
Repertoire of Effective Teaching Methods
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE
Knowledge and Understanding of Students
THE STRATEGIC TEACHER
STRATEGY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE
Practice and Feedback
Explicit Instruction
Modeling
How and When to Use a Strategy
Thinking Aloud
Benefits of a Strategy

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FIGURE 4.3
Goals at a Glance: Reading to Learn

Reading to Learn

Select the essential cognitive strategies your students need to be successful strategic readers.

Train all of your teachers to teach those strategies.

Give teachers the time and support they need to become strategic teachers.

Integrate strategy instruction in the content areas year after year after year.

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FIGURE 5.1
The "Zone"

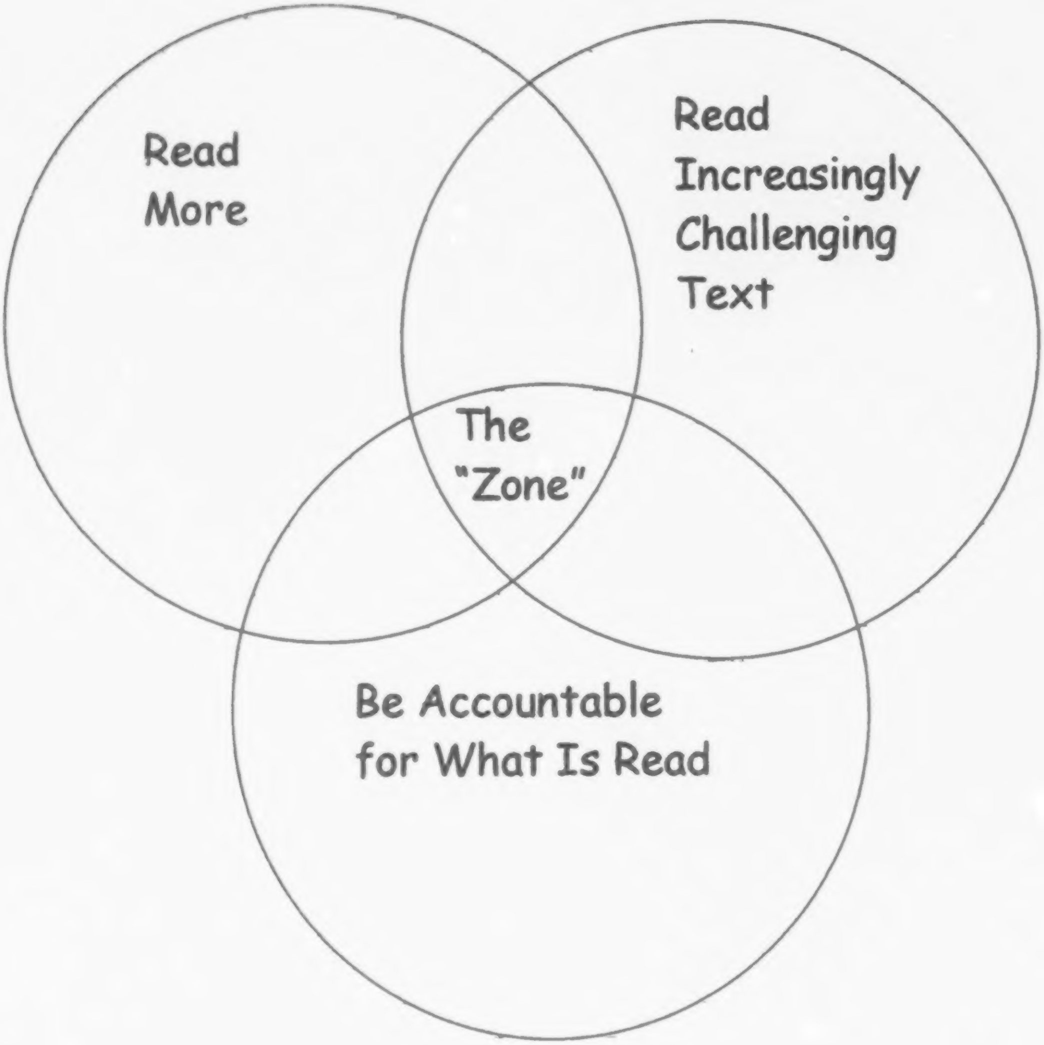
Read More
Read Increasingly Challenging Text
The "Zone"
Be Accountable for What Is Read

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FIGURE 5.2

Goals at a Glance: Reading to Raise Achievement

Reading to Raise Achievement

Read a lot of books.

Read more challenging books.

Read well-written books.

Read varied books.

Read with accountability.

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FIGURE 6.1
Goals at a Glance: Motivating Students to Read in the "Zone"

Motivating Students to Read in the "Zone"

The right kind of teachers

The skills and strategies to read with confidence and success

The right kind of books:
lots of books
at the right levels
to stir interest and stimulate curiosity

Opportunities for directed and focused silent reading during the school day

Promotion of books and reading by every teacher

Superior library services

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TABLE 7.1
Force Field Analysis Work Sheet

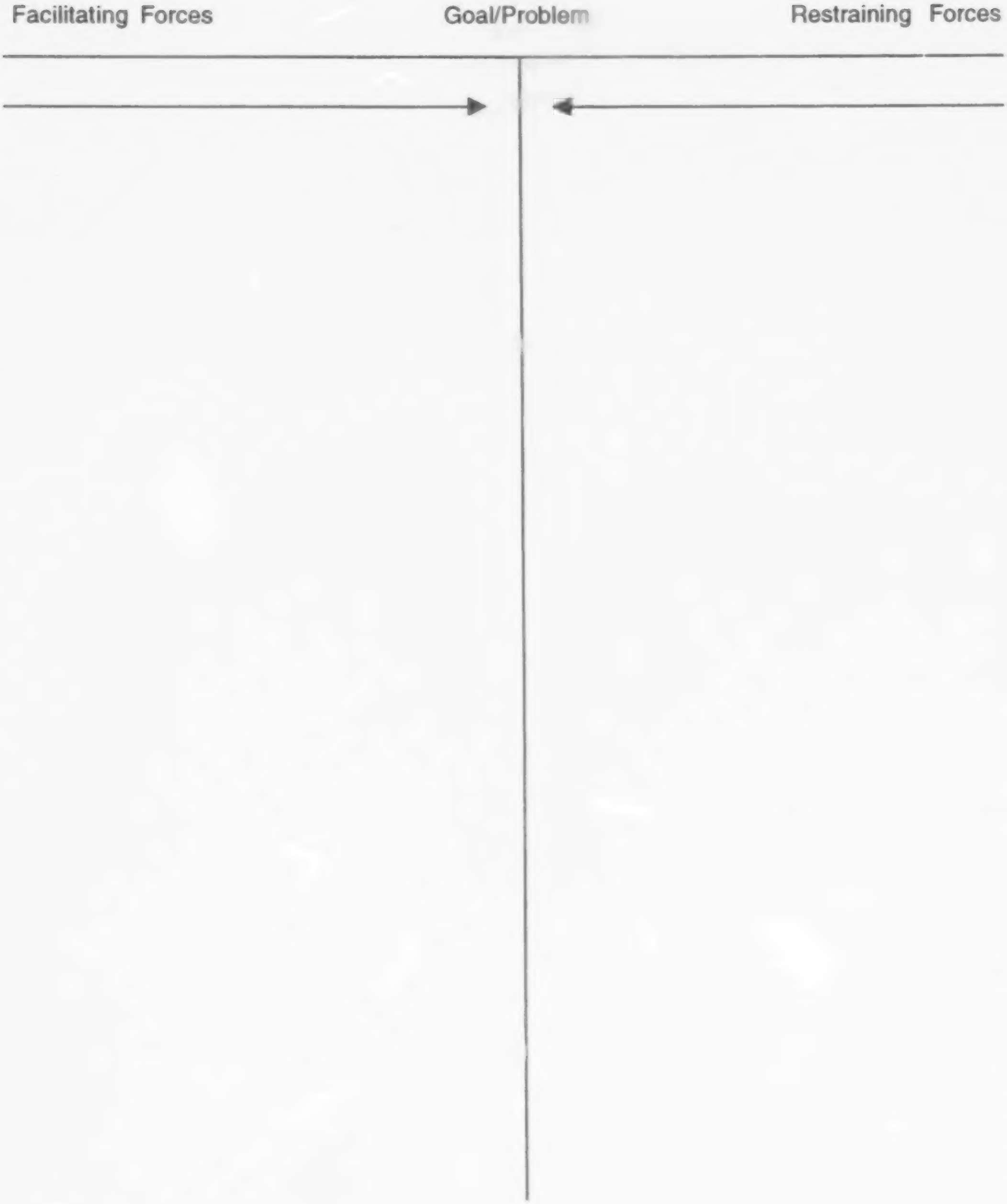
Facilitating Forces
Goal/Problem
Restraining Forces

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TABLE 7.2
Sample Force Field Analysis

To become a school in which all students read with confidence and enthusiasm and all teachers model strategic reading and teaching.

Facilitating Forces	Goal/Problem	Restraining Forces
→		←
Dedicated, caring, hardworking, and knowledgeable faculty		Too many student below grade level when they enroll at our school
Well-organized staff development program		Lack of parental support
Core group of high-achieving students and parents		School not high priority for students—extracurricular activities and work interfere
People wanting to improve		Don't know anything about reading instruction—we're content teachers
Supportive administration		Students not reading enough
Resources available in form of grants and budget allocations		Students not liking to read
Good climate and culture in school		Low expectations regarding what we can realistically accomplish with low-achieving students
		Too much on our plates already
		Lack of time
		Scheduling problems

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FIGURE 7.1
Sample Set of Core Values

The teaching of reading is the responsibility of every teacher.

We *can* teach every student in our school how to read.

Every student can learn.

The learner should be treated with respect, even if that learner may be behaving inappropriately.

The teacher makes a difference in how, what, when, and why students learn.

Good teaching involves creating as many opportunities as possible for successful learning—instructional tenacity, if you will.

We must model and then teach strategic reading to our students.

We will support and encourage each other through mentoring, coaching, sharing, and cooperating.

Effective two-way communication is the responsibility of every student, teacher, parent, and administrator.

Important decisions must be made collegially.

Time to teach and learn must be protected.

We believe that if students work hard, they will achieve.

We have high expectations for every student.

We have high expectations for ourselves as teachers and administrators.

We believe that every teacher shares responsibility for the behavior and learning of every student in our school.

We respect, value, and welcome the ideas, input, and concerns of parents.

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FIGURE 7.2

Goals at a Glance: Seven Steps to Effective Instructional Leadership

Seven Steps to Effective Instructional Leadership

1. Establish clear instructional goals.

2. Be there for your staff.

3. Create a school culture and climate conducive to learning.

4. Communicate the vision and mission of your school.

5. Set high expectations for your staff.

6. Develop teacher leaders.

7. Maintain positive attitudes toward students, staff, and parents.

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FIGURE 7.3

Goals at a Glance: Create a Reading Culture in Your School

Create a Reading Culture in Your School

Follow the seven steps to effective instructional leadership.

Share decision making with your school community.

Plan carefully for change.

Get mom and dad on your side.

Be results oriented and accountable.

Take the time you need to get the job done.

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FIGURE C.1

Letter From Charles to Linda

Linda,

Hello. It's just me, Charles. well I'm here at the county jail doing the hardest time ever. I miss concord jail because It's not as big as this one and the guards are nicer and so are the inmates. well I have been staying to myself but I am in a six man cell with seven other people. Already I have been In two fights and lost both. I didn't even do anything. people fight around here just to pass time so I stay away from everybody.

I do have good news my case Is looking good. I'm not going to get life in prison. I won't even get anymore time than what I allready have. I have read two book since I got here, one was 352 pages and the other had 200. I am enjoying reading more than ever. whenever I read a book It's like I'm no longer in jail I am were ever the book is about. I have been tring to remember all my vocab sounds and study them.

Linda, I would like to thank you for being such a careing person and teacher. I have learned so much from your class and by seeing that I can learn and that I am smart gives me reason to want to better myself.

I hope that I will be comeing back up there soon because I enjoy being abel to go to your classes and learning so much from you. If I can't get them to bring me back up there I want to thank you now for everything. Linda you have only been teaching me for a few months and I have never in my life enjoyed learning as much as I do now.

Thank you for believing in me.
Your friend and student,
Charles

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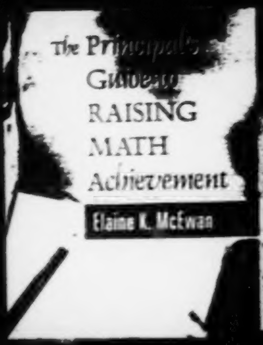
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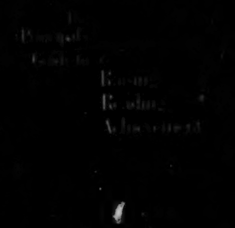
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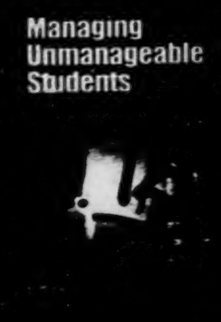
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